The New REPUBLIC

SEPTEMBER 24, 2008 • $4.95

DAWN OF THE AGE OF PALIN

WHAT A TERRIBLE YEAR FOR WOMEN
Michelle Cottle

MOMMY-WAR ARMAGEDDON
Katherine Marsh

GOD HELP US
Leon Wieseltier

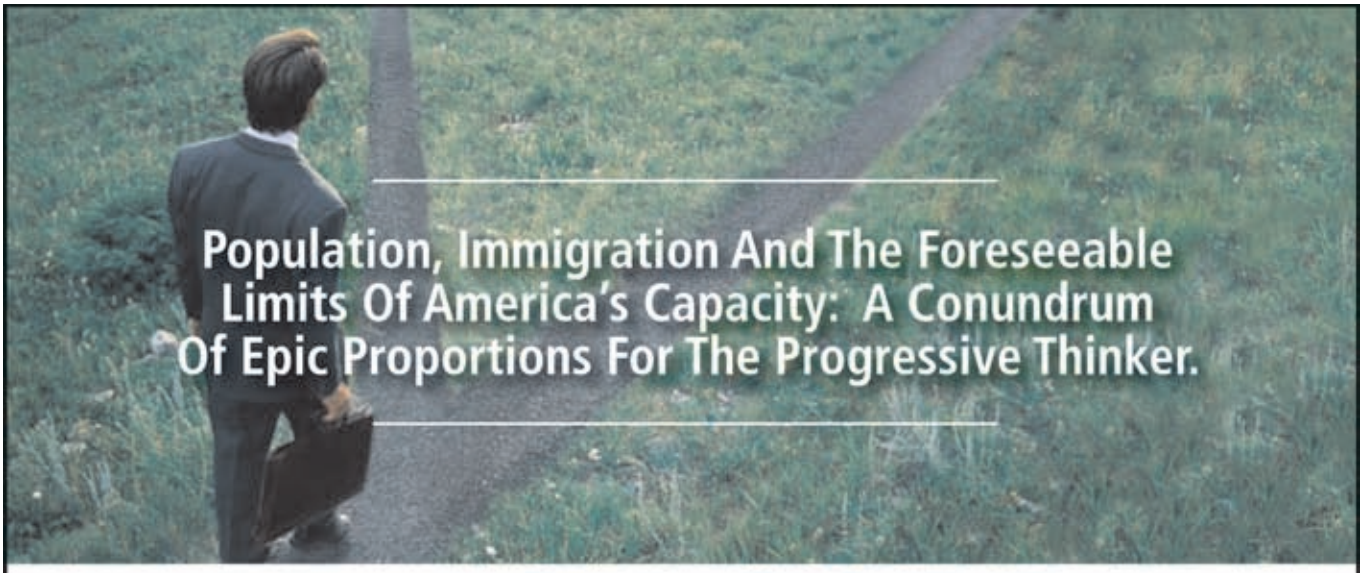
THE CASE AGAINST SARAH PALIN
(*By Sarah Palin*)

. . . JUST IN TIME FOR THE RETURN OF RUSSIA
Leon Aron
David Greenberg
Michael Ignatieff

Plus

WHO OWNS ANTIQUITY?
Ingrid D. Rowland

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Population, Immigration And The Foreseeable Limits Of America's Capacity: A Conundrum Of Epic Proportions For The Progressive Thinker.

As America's population races from the current 300 million to a projected 400 million in the next 30 years*, progressive thinkers are confronted with a debate among themselves – and others – as to our nation's capacity to absorb natural population growth and growth due almost entirely to immigration. What price will we pay in terms of the environment? What will be the impact on resources from water to energy? What additional challenges will be created by this growth? What is our responsibility to future generations?

The Dots That Nobody Really Wants To Connect

People of virtually all major political persuasions agree that America has problems—huge problems. Air quality in many regions is a threat to health. Water is compromised and becoming scarce. Traffic in a number of metropolitan areas has arrived at a point that makes it unfixable. Infrastructure is a disaster waiting to happen. Who can argue with those observations? The disagreement arises when anyone makes the point that all of these problems are caused by a large and fast growing population, most of it unanticipated. The more people there are, the more challenging the problems become. These problems are acute with our population at the current level of 300 million. What happens at 400 million? Or 600 million?

The Misconception Of Inevitability

One prevailing thought for those who are willing to connect the dots is that meteoric population growth is inevitable. The pyramid is being built and there is nothing we can do about it. Population growth is destined to be exponential. But the reality is that Americans are having fewer children. The other reality is that America's future population growth will be driven by immigration. While immigration at some level will surely continue, there is a case to be made for taking another look at the numbers in order to maintain some order and common sense in the growth of our population.

At Some Point, You May Have To Make A Choice

We want it all. We want a clean environment, adequate natural resources, good housing, plenty of food, first-rate healthcare and so on. We also feel a need to welcome the world to our front door, or in millions of cases, our back door. But America is rapidly approaching the point of no return. Either we opt for preserving the quality of life that has attracted so many millions in the past by turning away some in the future. Or we continue to accept millions, knowing that our children and grandchildren will continue to pay a huge price.

Nobody wants to close the doors. Nobody wants to totally abandon our heritage of immigration and rich tapestry it has woven. But with more sensible numbers we could actually restore it. More and more progressive thinkers are saying it is time to connect the dots. To think about the future. To solve the conundrum that is placing so many like-minded thinkers in conflict.

America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning

300 million people today, 400 million in just 30 years. Think about it.

American Immigration Control Foundation	Californians for Population Stabilization	Federation for American Immigration Reform	NumbersUSA	Social Contract Press
www.aicfoundation.com	www.capsweb.org	www.fairus.org	www.numbersusa.org	www.thesocialcontract.com

*Based on 2008 Census Bureau projections

Paid for by America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

VOLUME 239 WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 24, 2008 NUMBER 4,844

The Case Against Sarah Palin

On the vice presidency:
"But as for that v.p. talk all the time, I'll tell you, I still can't answer that question until somebody answers for me what is it, exactly, that the v.p. does every day?"
—July 31, 2008, CNBC's "Kudlow & Company"

On Iraq:
"I've been so focused on state government, I haven't really focused much on the war in Iraq. I heard on the news about the new deployments, and while I support our president, Condoleezza Rice, and the administration, I want to know that we have an exit plan in place."
—March 21, 2007, Alaska Business Monthly

"Pray for our military men and women who are striving to do what is right. Also, for this country, that our leaders, our national leaders, are sending [American soldiers] out on a task that is from God. That's what we have to make sure that we're praying for, that there is a plan and that that plan is God's plan."
–June 8, 2008, Wasilla Assembly of God Church

On creationism:
"Growing up with being so privileged and blessed to be given a lot of information on, on both sides of the subject—creationism and evolution. It's been a healthy foundation for me. But don't be afraid of information and let kids debate both sides." *—October 25, 2006, gubernatorial debate*

On global warming:
"A changing environment will affect Alaska more than any other state, because of our location. I'm not one, though, who would attribute it to being man-made."
—August 29, 2008, Newsmax

On energy:
"I think God's will has to be done in unifying people and companies to get that gas line built, so pray for that."
—June 8, 2008, Wasilla Assembly of God Church

On receiving $1.8 million in federal earmarks for the city of Wasilla:
"FYI This does not include our nearly one million Dollars from the Feds for our Airport Paving Project. We did well!!!"
—June 14, 1999, Wasilla City Council Informational Memorandum 99-62

On that "Bridge to Nowhere":
Question: "Would you continue state funding for the proposed Knik Arm and Gravina Island bridges?"
Palin: "Yes. I would like to see Alaska's infrastructure projects built sooner rather than later. The window is now—while our congressional delegation is in a strong position to assist."
—October 22, 2006, Anchorage Daily News

On library books she doesn't like:
"What would your response be if I asked you to remove some books from the collection?"
—October 1996 conversation with librarian Mary Ellen Emmons, Anchorage Daily News

On the secessionist Alaskan Independence Party:
"Your party plays an important role in our state's politics … keep up the good work, and God bless you."
—2006 video address to Independence Party's convention

On Ivana Trump:
"We want to see Ivana because we are so desperate in Alaska for any semblance of glamour and culture."
—April 3, 1996, Anchorage Daily News

On running Wasilla:
"It's not rocket science. It's six million dollars and fifty-three employees."
—October 1996, Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman

On being governor:
"I will unambiguously, steadfastly, and doggedly guard the interests of this great state, as a mother naturally guards her own. Like a Southeast Eagle and her eaglets, or, more appropriately here in the Carlson, like a Nanook defending her cub."
—December 4, 2006, inaugural address

On the prospect of becoming a candidate for vice president:
"It kind of cracks me up. It is so far out of the realm of possibility and reality."
—August 14, 2008, Financial Post

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When America's 250 million wireless customers demand, we deliver. It's what keeps us competitive. You wanted discounted phones and family plans. You wanted mobile broadband, GPS, MP3s and video. You wanted more affordable ways to keep in touch and more efficient ways to work. And tomorrow, you'll want even more. **OK.**

CTIA
The Wireless Association®
www.ctia.org

YOUR WIRELESS COMPANIES.
READY FOR WHATEVER AMERICA WANTS NEXT.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

September 24, 2008

The Editors **1** **THE CASE AGAINST SARAH PALIN**
Why she's unqualified—in her own words.

TRB

Jonathan Chait **5** **CAPITAL OFFENSE** *How the rich rolled Barack Obama.*

THE MALL

Michelle Cottle **7** *Eighteen million cracks, and one crackpot.*

Katherine Marsh **9** *The working mothers' case against Sarah Palin.*

Greg Veis **11** *Cable news's tallest midgets.*

David Greenberg **13** *How neocons made liberals wary of idealism.*

Nate Silver **14** *Obama versus McCain, the money map.*

FEATURES

Fred Strebeigh **16** **LADIES' MAN** *The backslapping, bloviating hero of women's rights.*

Jeffrey Rosen **18** **CONSTITUTIONAL BIDEN** *Civil liberties' greatest salesman.*

Jonathan Cohn **22** **MORE RADICAL THAN BUSH**
The full horror of John McCain's economic agenda.

Peter Bergen **25** **A MAN, A PLAN, AFGHANISTAN**
If Obama really wants to smite Al Qaeda, this is what he should do.

BOOKS AND THE ARTS

Stanley Kauffmann **29** **FILMS** **SETTINGS** *An American in Panjim; family ties and tugs.*

Jed Perl **30** **ART** **PHILOSOPHICAL FURNISHINGS** *Is interior decorating a fine art? A look at how Thomas Hope and Jean-Michel Frank, two masters of the decorative arts, used their craft to improve and reform the way we look and live.*

Lawrence Raab **34** **POEM** **ECSTATIC**

Leon Aron **35** **ESSAY** **THE PROBLEMATIC PAGES** *What is Vladimir Putin's view of Russian history? A new textbook, sanctioned by the Kremlin and just appearing in Russian high schools, exposes the full horror of Putin's worldview.*

Michael Ignatieff **41** **BOOKS** **THE DUTY TO RESCUE** ***Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention*** *by Gary J. Bass*

Ingrid D. Rowland **43** **BOOKS** **FOUND AND LOST** ***Who Owns Antiquity?: Museums and the Battle Over Our Ancient Heritage*** *by James Cuno*

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Leon Wieseltier **48** **AGAINST INTEGRITY**

Cover photoillustration by Lou Beach. Palin: AP Photo/Al Grillo; Putin: Gamma/Eyedea/ZUMA Press

THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 239, Number 5, Issue 4,844, September 24, 2008. (Printed in the United States on September 5, 2008.) Published bi-weekly (except for skipped publication dates of May 21, July 23, and December 17, 2008) at 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Lauren Sims at (202) 508-4444. Yearly subscriptions, $79.97; foreign, $119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, $99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling).

© 2008 by The New Republic, LLC.

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. For hard copy reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone (800) 521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Send letters and unsolicited manuscripts to letters@tnr.com. Poetry submissions must be e-mailed to poetry@tnr.com. **For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ExxonMobil is donating this space to the National Math and Science Initiative.

Do the math

A proven formula for improving U.S. math and science proficiency.

Imagine if we could dramatically increase the number of American high-school students taking — and passing — Advanced Placement exams in math and science.

Imagine the improved odds of success for these young people. Students who pass AP exams are three times more likely to earn a college degree than those who do not.

Imagine the benefit to our nation, where declining math and science proficiency poses an increasing threat to America's future as an innovator and economic leader.

No need to imagine any longer. It's already happening in 143 high schools in seven states.

These schools are implementing the Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program supported by the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI).

This innovative program offers training for AP teachers, tutoring for students, and mini-scholarships, and provides greater opportunities for minorities and economically disadvantaged students.

The results are startling: For participating schools in their first year of the program, AP enrollment in math, science, and English rose by nearly 60 percent this year alone. As a result, in 2009 the number of students taking these AP exams in these 143 schools is projected to be over 30,000.

NMSI's other flagship program, UTeach, which encourages math and science majors to pursue careers in teaching, had similar success. At the University of Texas and the 13 universities awarded grants to begin UTeach programs, over 1,000 students enrolled.

Think of it: In just one year, a thousand more bright minds committed to teaching math and science, and thousands better prepared to compete in today's technology-driven economy.

We can multiply that success — across schools, and across the nation. Many more states and universities stand ready to adopt NMSI's programs once funding is available.

In support of NMSI, ExxonMobil has committed the largest single financial gift ever for improving math and science education. Other funding partners include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. We invite other private donors to join this important, urgent cause.

We also urge government to back this education movement. Congress recognized the urgency of improving math and science education by passing the America COMPETES Act earlier this year, but has not funded the programs.

Now, as lawmakers weigh how best to fund our nation's educational goals, NMSI's programs are available as proven, powerful tools that can be replicated across all 50 states.

Because when you do the math, one of the best ways to strengthen America's technological leadership is to invest in the students who will become tomorrow's innovators.

To learn more, visit www.nationalmathandscience.org.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Capital Offense

How the rich rolled Barack Obama.

JONATHAN CHAIT

DURING A Democratic primary debate back in April, ABC News anchor Charlie Gibson took a brief respite from haranguing Barack Obama about his hatred for America to harangue him about his plan to increase the tax rate on capital gains. Gibson insisted that "one hundred million people in this country own stock and would be affected." He further declared, "History shows that, when you drop the capital gains tax, the revenues go up." Obama meekly insisted that he didn't really plan to raise the capital gains tax very much. And, indeed, he doesn't, proposing to raise the top rate to just 20 percent, or half his proposed level on ordinary income. You know how Warren Buffett has said he pays a lower tax rate than his secretary? Apparently, Obama isn't going to redress that.

Not that I can entirely blame him. The tax preference for capital gains is one of the most sacrosanct giveaways in the federal budget, zealously defended by a fearsome lobby. It's ethanol for millionaires. The only difference is that, when candidates come out against the ethanol subsidy, the news media gives them a pat on the head. If, on the other hand, you suggest trimming back the capital gains subsidy, the Charlie Gibsons of the world bite your head off.

One sustaining myth for the capital gains break is that it's a tax on the middle class. In fact, 60 percent of capital gains income goes to the .02 percent of Americans who earn more than $1 million a year. Yes, 100 million Americans own stock, but most of them have very little, and what little they have is mostly in pension plans that don't pay capital gains taxes anyway. In 2005, less than 14 million taxpayers had any capital gains at all.

More maddening is the constantly repeated claim that cutting capital gains tax rates makes revenue rise. Yes, capital gains revenues are higher than they were in 2003, when Republicans last cut the top rate to 15 percent. But they're still lower than they were in 2000, the last business cycle peak, when the rate was 20 percent.

And, even if capital gains revenues really did rise after a rate cut, it would prove nothing. Suppose you gave a big income tax cut to anybody who owns a Ferrari. Lots of people would go out and buy Ferraris to qualify for the lower rate. Hence, tax revenues from Ferrari-owners would rise, but not because Ferrari ownership had stimulated their entrepreneurial spirits. It would just reflect shifting income from one category to another.

Another justification for the capital gains break is that it rewards risk-taking or entrepreneurship. But the capital gains break rewards all kinds of capital investment, risky or otherwise. Anyway, why should the government favor risk? The risky new businesses that have a good potential for reward usually attract capital to finance them, so they don't need government help. Risky ones that don't have good potential usually don't get capital, but if they don't offer a good potential return, why should they? Allocating capital is exactly the kind of thing the invisible hand does well and government does poorly.

Some economists do favor lower capital gains rates, on the grounds that the income has already been taxed at the corporate level. But huge amounts of capital income escape taxation altogether. As Tax Policy Center director Leonard Burman writes, "the best response to that problem is a credit against individual income taxes for all taxes already paid at the company level, not capital gains taxes for private equity, land and oil wells, all of which are untouched by the corporate tax."

A basic axiom of economics holds that the tax code should be as neutral as possible—that is, it shouldn't encourage one kind of activity over another. The capital gains break introduces a distortion into the market. If I have $100 to invest, I can put it into the bank and pay a regular tax rate on the interest I earn, or I can put it into the stock market or real estate and pay the lower capital gains rate on my profits. If capital gains were taxed at the same rate as other kinds of income, then market signals would be the only factor behind my choice. By favoring capital gains, the government overrides the logic of the market.

The more common real-world result of the capital gains break is to encourage executives to turn their salary into capital gains via creative bookkeeping. My brother started a successful business creating custom software for the financial industry. He told me a while ago that he was spending an enormous amount of his time with lawyers and accountants, figuring out ways to have his salary come in the form of capital gains. All that time and money is an enormous waste.

The 1986 Tax Reform Act, a bipartisan deal between Democrats and Ronald Reagan hailed by economists, swept away the capital gains preference along with most of the other loopholes in the tax code. Since then, the capital gains rate has slowly crept down. In 1997, Bill Clinton agreed to a capital gains cut in return for more spending on children's health care. In 2003, President Bush cut the capital gains tax even lower. Now not even Obama is willing to end the capital gains preference.

Obama's leading economic advisers recently penned a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed rebutting the incessant accusation on that page that their candidate is a quasi-Bolshevik. In it, they boasted of their candidate's low capital gains rate. "A 20 percent rate," they noted, "is almost a third lower than the rate President Reagan set in 1986." Um, hurray?

One of the more Dada moments of the whole campaign came during Obama's triumphant convention speech. He promised to eliminate capital gains taxes on start-ups and small businesses, and 80,000 Democrats cheered. I booed my TV set.

Why has the capital gains preference become so unassailable? Obviously, the fact that it benefits the filthy rich doesn't hurt. But another factor is the terminology. "Capital gains tax" suggests some extra levy on capital gains. In reality, we don't have a capital gains tax. We have an income tax with special lower rates for income that comes from capital.

I'm thinking that we should start labeling income that journalists earn as a "journalism tax." It sounds like the Stamp Tax. Why are *we* being singled out? Imagine how much better we members of the Fourth Estate could do our vital work if we didn't have this oppressive tax. Take, say, network anchors. What incentive do they have to ask factual, non-self-interested questions if their success will be punished by a *journalism tax*?

Some powerful media figure needs to take up this cause. I think I know just the man for it. ◆

TRB
From Washington

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Study of 4000 indicates marijuana discourages use of hard drugs.

A ground-breaking study of 4117 marijuana smokers in California[1] reveals that the 'Gateway Theory' probably had it backwards. Instead of enticing young people to use other drugs, this study suggests that marijuana may have the opposite effect.

This first-ever clinical examination of a large number of medical marijuana applicants depicts a population that is remarkably normal. The percentages earning bachelors' degrees and doctorates are nearly identical to the national numbers. They are, in the main, productive citizens with jobs, homes and families who smoke marijuana weekly or daily – and have in some cases for decades.

For the vast majority of these applicants, their use of cannabis ultimately led to a decrease in the use of tobacco, alcohol, and hard drugs. Asked to compare their current alcohol consumption with their lifetime peak, over 10% claimed to be abstinent and nearly 90% claimed to have cut their drinking in half.

They also report using cannabis as self medication for stress and anxiety – with fewer side effects than the legal pharmaceutical alternatives.

As children, a significant percentage of the male applicants had been treated for ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Today their routine morning use of minimal amounts of cannabis strongly suggests that it enhances their ability to concentrate by allowing them to focus on one problem at a time.

As one construction company estimator said, "After two hits and my morning coffee, I'm the best estimator in the company."

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
www.info@csdp.org

[1] Long term marijuana users seeking medical cannabis in California (2001–2007): demographics, social characteristics, patterns of cannabis and other drug use of 4117 applicants. – Thomas J O'Connell and Ché B Bou Matar
http://www.harmreductionjournal.com/content/4/1/16

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Mall

Shattered

Eighteen million cracks, and one crackpot.

Can someone please tell me what the hell happened? This presidential election was supposed to be a high-water mark for feminism. Hillary Clinton entered the primaries as the first female front-runner in our nation's history. Better still, she wasn't running as a Woman Candidate. Yes, Hillary had an established track record of championing so-called women's issues, including children's health care, affordable day care, family medical leave, and, of course, reproductive rights. But her focus on strength and experience pretty much precluded her playing the gender card. Forget your garden-variety female pol's struggle to prove herself tough enough to hang with the Big Boys: Hillary's entire strategy was to prove that she was *tougher* than the Big Boys. Fan or foe, few people questioned her basic qualifications to be commander-in-chief, and no one suggested that her political juice was a by-product of identity politics. Whether she won or lost—though the widespread assumption was that her victory was inevitable—Hillary's candidacy was expected to showcase what it means to be a broad-shouldered, ass-kicking modern woman.

Then, amid the snows of Iowa, it all fell apart. To be fair, New Hampshire may be more to blame. Iowa was where Hillary's inevitability narrative unraveled, but New Hampshire was where she got the idea that redemption lay in the legions of gals who rallied 'round when the (mostly male) political establishment and punditocracy began salivating at the thought of her imminent demise. That much of the animus toward Hillary had more to do with her last name than her chromosomes did not matter; women objected to seeing one of their own kicked to the curb with such haste. Hillary's now famous moment of teary-eyed vulnerability fueled their fury. Sisterhood is what resurrected Hillary in New Hampshire.

And, just like that, the strong, proud, fearless, gender-transcendent Hillary morphed into a disrespected, mistreated victim. Grievance feminism came roaring back with a vengeance. Clinton's supporters increasingly went from praising her gender-neutral success to celebrating her triumph over a male-dominated system and decrying the patriarchal forces still aligned against her. Obama wasn't just beating Clinton; he was behaving, as Hillary surrogate Geraldine Ferraro charged, in a "terribly sexist" fashion. Party bigwigs, we were told, were pushing Clinton to bow out in a way that they would never pressure a man. Her supporters, meanwhile, saw themselves as suffering the same demeaning treatment women have endured through the ages. As one pro-Hillary group raged, women were being told to "sit down, shut up, and move to the back of the bus." In May, to combat the growing sense that Clinton had little chance of winning and so should drop out of the race, a group of her devotees formed a group pompously yet plaintively titled Women Count—as though all those who wanted the Democratic race over did so out of disrespect for an entire gender.

By primary's end, the whining was so intense and Hillary's struggle so interwoven with the cause of women's rights that the Democratic National Committee was compelled to insert into its platform this statement: "We believe that standing up for our country means standing up against sexism and all intolerance. Demeaning portrayals of women cheapen our debates, dampen the dreams of our

WHITE HOUSE WATCH *With* **DREW FRIEDMAN**

"Sure, I'd be happy to answer your questions, Mr. Brokaw."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

daughters, and deny us the contributions of too many. Responsibility lies with us all." How sad that, in the year Hillary was supposed to show just how far women have come, Democrats wound up enshrining such a plodding, patronizing admission of how far we apparently have to go.

For those who kept an eye on the inner workings of Hillary's campaign, the race proved disappointing on a more concrete, personal level as well. Going in, this was supposed to be Hillaryland's chance to shine. Clinton's team was stocked with top-level women to a degree that no other presidential campaign had approached. Hillary herself, after years in her husband's political shadow, was at last free to run things her way. But, as it turned out, Hillary wasn't much of an organizational leader, delaying key decisions and failing to control her feuding senior staff. The minute Iowa derailed Hillary's smooth ride, Bill and his people stepped in and began exerting greater influence over the race—much to the dismay of many Hillarylanders. Far from her coming-out party, Hillary's campaign wound up being just another instance in which Bill and his boys became convinced that they knew best how things should run.

Not even the primary's resolution could end the drama. As many of Clinton's supporters and fund-raisers prepared to unify behind Obama, the true dead-enders—an overwhelmingly female cohort—grew ever more marginalized and belligerent. Giving themselves cutesy names (PUMAs! Hillary Villagers!) and loudly venting their rage or sorrow at their hero's unjust fall, they were increasingly derided as overly emotional and downright nutty. No matter that Americans of both genders tend to cast their presidential votes less on reason than on gut-level intangibles; the extremism of Hillary dead-enders has played into all those tired stereotypes about women being fuzzy-headed and irrational. By the time of the conventions, MSNBC's notoriously chauvinistic Chris Matthews was far from the only person grumbling about "women of a certain age."

Then, just when you thought it was all over and the recovery could begin, Republicans handed us Sarah Palin.

The Palin pick is disheartening on so many levels. For starters, even what little we know about the Alaska governor's policy views is enough to make a traditional feminist weep. The staunchly conservative Palin not only opposes abortion rights (even in cases of rape or incest), she also supports abstinence-only sex education and takes a strict free-market approach toward health care.

Of course, these days, the feminist mantle is claimed by pro-life conservatives and pro-choice progressives alike. Palin herself is a proud member of Feminists for Life. Feminism seems no longer to denote a particular set of values or ideological agenda; it is merely a label appropriated to proclaim that one is committed to the best interests of women—whatever one believes those to be. Thus far, there's no reason to doubt that Palin devoutly believes her hard-core conservatism is right for women. A McCain-Palin White House, however, would spell only trouble for women's rights.

Even setting aside Palin's political views, the governor's candidacy is a slap in the face to all women. No matter how feisty she is or how darling she looks with a rifle on her shoulder, Palin is abjectly unqualified to sit one heartbeat away from the presidency. She is less than two years into her first term as governor of a state with a population roughly equivalent to that of Baltimore or Fort Worth. Her minimal experience with national domestic issues is overshadowed only by her total lack of experience, or even apparent interest, in foreign affairs. This makes her a bizarre choice for a candidate who has been hawking the need for experience and gravitas in these troubled times—and makes the cynical tokenism of Palin's selection all the more vivid.

By far the most insulting aspect of Palin's candidacy is the McCain team's hope that placing a ballsy female on the ticket will attract some former Hillary supporters by stoking their gender-based resentments against Obama and the DNC. Palin has been happy to encourage this strategy by cheering Hillary's "eighteen million cracks in the glass ceiling" and offering herself up as a way to help women go even farther. Sadly, some Hillary dead-enders may be so blinded by bitterness that they fall for this nonsense. The rest of us should be outraged by a strategy so nakedly founded on the premise that Hillary gals were driven more by identity politics than by any interest in their candidate's values, ideology, or qualifications. It's not just that Palin stands on the opposite side of so many issues dear to Hillary; she is also vastly less accomplished and engaged than the senator from New York. (As political consultant Dan Gerstein has quipped, many Hillary supporters will think Palin "not worthy of carrying their candidate's pantsuit.") In Team McCain's eyes, however, female candidates are pretty much interchangeable and women voters too addlepated to know the difference. We don't care about issues or experience; we just want someone with the same reproductive parts as ours.

None of which is to disparage Palin's inherent intelligence, political savvy, or judgment. It's entirely possible that some day she could make a top-notch vice presidential, or even presidential, candidate. But, at this point, we are talking about a woman who makes Dan Quayle circa 1988 look like an elder statesman.

Alas, fair or not, like all public figures who rise to prominence as tokens, Palin's failures will reflect on the group she has been tapped to represent. If McCain loses in November, Palin will become a punchline à la Geraldine Ferraro. Hopefully, women have progressed enough in politics that a McCain-Palin loss would not prompt lingering hesitations about putting women front and center in positions of power. But there's little doubt that every clueless, unprepared, or unpresidential word out of Palin's mouth will have tongues clucking over what the need to cater to women voters has wrought.

Working mothers in particular should be holding their breath. The McCain camp's decision to pitch Palin's Supermom-of-five status as one of her chief assets has opened yet another front in the endless and endlessly counterproductive Mommy Wars. The moment Palin's addition to the ticket was announced, women began publicly and privately savaging the hard-charging governor for perceived mothering missteps both great and small. (What kind of pregnant woman is reckless enough to travel twelve-plus hours from Texas to Alaska *after* her water breaks? What mom subjects her pregnant, unmarried 17-year-old to the scrutiny of a presidential race?! How *dare* she take her newborn to a campaign event without socks?!!) How, or whether one should even try, to balance career and family remains a raw subject for women in this country, and the centrality of Palin's motherhood to her candidacy guarantees that this corrosive debate will rage for the remainder of the election.

Am I suggesting that all of these setbacks for feminism are Palin's fault? Or Hillary's? Or that there is nothing at all to celebrate in their achievements? Of course not. Neither would I argue for a second that these smart, ambitious women shouldn't be pushing as hard as they can to get what they want out of life. But, as with any enduring movement, feminism has its shining moments and its discouraging ones. I just wish someone had warned me ahead of time that this election season would wind up falling with such a thud into the latter category.

Michelle Cottle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Whine Not

The working mothers' case against Sarah Palin.

The day of the Sarah Palin announcement, I called the small cadre of senior female writers and editors who work at The New Republic to see if any of them wanted to write a piece about their reaction. Not surprisingly, the women of TNR had a lot to say. But it was also the eve of a holiday weekend, and, with seven small children and one full-time staffer among the four of us, we had to scramble to find the time.

Sarah Palins we are not. Central to the narrative that the McCain campaign is selling about Palin is that, in addition to being the reformist governor of Alaska, she's a supermom, too. During his announcement, McCain referred to Palin as a "devoted wife and mother of five," while Palin, who began her speech by introducing her children, referred to herself variously as "just your average hockey mom in Alaska," "the team mom," and "the mother of one of those troops" (her son Track heads to Iraq this month). And she does all that mothering in addition to running a state.

Stories of Palin's working-mom feats abound: She gave birth to her daughter and was back at work the very next day! She flew to a Texas meeting of governors while eight months pregnant with her son, laboring on the plane home! She brought her newborn with her to the office, reportedly nursing through a meeting! *How can you feminists not love her?* the GOP seems to say. OK, so there's that little thing about *Roe* v. *Wade,* but, surely, Palin proves women can have it all. And she makes it seem so achievable. You just do it. As Palin recently explained to *People* magazine, "What I've had to do, though, is in the middle of the night, put down the BlackBerries and pick up the breast pump. Do a couple of things different and still get it all done."

It's a distinctly Republican vision of feminism: If you can't do it all, you're just not working hard enough. And, if you want more societal or governmental support, Palin's ideology has a word for that: whining. That's how she described Hillary Clinton's reaction to sexism on the campaign trail (that is, before Clinton became her personal hero), advising her in a *Newsweek* interview to "work harder."

But the reason most of us are not Sarah Palins has nothing to do with lack of effort or of desire. We also want it all. It's just that we have less to work *with.* Palin not only has the type of office (namely, her own) where you can bring your daughter to work more than one day a year; she has a large and supportive family network (her husband is currently devoting himself full-time to the kids) and plenty of financial resources. The deepest insult is that Palin's brand of up-by-your-bootstraps feminism allows the McCain campaign to appear to support working moms—plus hockey moms, team moms, soldiers' moms—while rejecting the policies that would actually make their lives better.

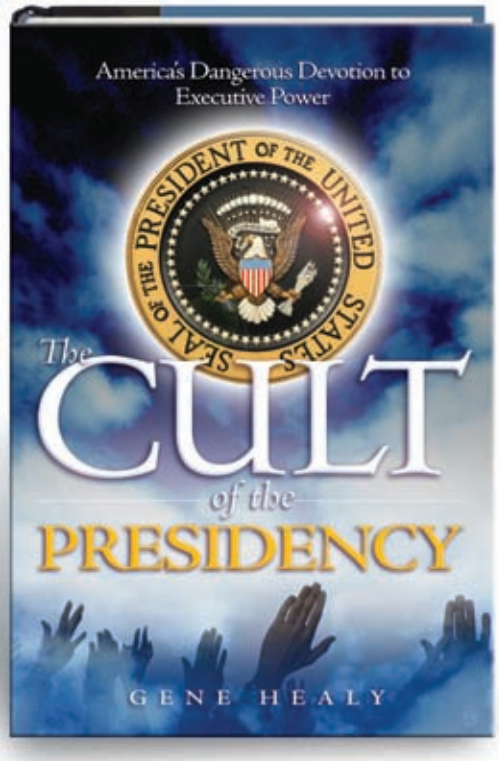
There are several attacks that have been leveled at Palin for running as a working mom that are flat-out unfair. Chief among them is that Palin's career prevents her from being a good mother. Shortly after her selection, John Roberts at CNN questioned whether Palin should be out on the campaign trail with a special-needs four-month-old. This line of attack only became more frenzied with the news that Palin's 17-year-old daughter is pregnant. This is the sort of judgmental mommy-war nonsense that would never be directed at a male politician: No one seriously thought Al Gore should have stayed home and stopped saving Planet Earth when his son was nabbed breaking the speed limit last year in a drug-laced Prius.

"The year's most pertinent and sobering public affairs book."
– GEORGE F. WILL, *Newsweek*

"Superb. Documents the ways our political system has been corrupted by an out-of-control, unchecked executive."
– GLENN GREENWALD, author, *How Would a Patriot Act?*

With voters looking to the president for salvation from all problems great and small—why are we surprised the presidency has burst its constitutional bonds and grown powerful enough to threaten American liberty? Learn how this happened—and what can be done.

PUBLISHED BY THE CATO INSTITUTE


America's Dangerous Devotion to Executive Power
SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
The CULT of the PRESIDENCY
GENE HEALY

Buy your copy at bookstores nationwide, call 800.767.1241, or visit Cato.org.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOSHUA ROBERTS/BLOOMBERG NEWS/LANDOV

Equally unfair are criticisms of Palin for politicizing her role as working mom. While it's true that Hillary Clinton did not make being a mother a big part of her campaign, Joe Biden highlighted his working-dad role in Denver with son Beau speaking movingly of Biden as an "incredible father" who would "travel to and from Washington four hours a day" on the train "to be there to put us to bed, to be there when we woke from a bad dream, to make us breakfast." Sure, Palin's talk of being a hockey mom of five is politically expedient. But so is Biden's tale of being an "Amtrak dad."

The one legitimate criticism that hasn't really been out there yet—but that should be—is that, in turning herself into Everywoman, Palin is significantly misrepresenting most every woman. The underlying point of the Biden story is that he made sacrifices—bowing out of the public ceremony for his oath of office when his kids were in the hospital, forgoing evening events in Washington—to be a parent first. In contrast, Palin's parenting story is not about sacrifice or even the struggle for balance but about blithely doing it all. This vision of parenting is not only unrealistic—it devalues the job. Whether you work or stay at home, parenting is an exhausting around-the-clock juggling act; the list of people I have to thank for giving me the emotional energy and time just to write this article reads like an Oscar acceptance speech. Once the difficulty and sacrifice of the job have been elided, the basis for policy solutions is seriously undermined.

And these solutions are sorely needed. Over 70 percent of mothers with children under the age of 18 work. Yet women still earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men (on average, the families of working women lose nearly $10,000 a year because of the earnings gap). Affordable child care is largely unavailable: In 2004, a single parent with average earnings spent about 37 percent of the family's after-tax income on center-based child care. This is an incredible financial burden, particularly for the 30 percent of working families headed by single mothers. And, with rising gas and food prices, the strain has only gotten worse.

Palin, by contrast, has a six-figure salary and an incredible support system—a husband with flexible jobs rather than a competing career, a close-knit community, and a host of nearby grandparents, aunts, and uncles to lend a hand on the domestic front. Palin freely admits to these advantages but offers no solutions for the majority of women who don't have them.

Palin is staunchly pro-life, but, beyond this very public position, she has a slender record on issues that affect working moms. She is a member of Feminists for Life, an anti-abortion group that also advocates for equal pay for women, for part-time and telecommuting situations for working moms, and against domestic violence. (The group supported Biden's Violence Against Women Act.) Presumably Palin shares these views. But, despite all her emphasis on being a working mom and breaking the glass ceiling, in her debut and acceptance speeches Palin never once mentioned her support for any of these issues or the legislation designed to address them. And she said nary a word about affordable child care. Her record on this issue is even more discouraging: Though it's true she did declare May 9 Child-Care Provider Appreciation Day, she also line-item vetoed the funding for a vocational residential facility that included a child care center for students, as well as the funds for breast-feeding pumps, among other supplies, for a Women, Infants, and Children program for poor women.

This is, of course, precisely the Republican Party line. The 2008 Republican Party platform advocates more part-time and flexible jobs for working parents but contains not a single mention of affordable child care or equal pay. And McCain's record on issues that affect working moms is on the same sorry page as his party's—he skipped a vote on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (which helps ensure women get equal pay); he opposed expanding the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which covers unin-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sured children, to include their parents; and he has consistently opposed not only abortion rights but family-planning legislation, even for low-income women.

By running as a spunky can-do Republican-style feminist mom who meets challenges head-on instead of whining about them, Palin may appeal to some working mothers, as the GOP intends. But it's more likely that a different demographic will find this winsome: anti-feminist men. Tarring anyone who struggles as a whiner is a common GOP tactic—from African Americans (Rush Limbaugh on Michelle Obama's undergraduate thesis on race: "It's a full whine") to the poor (Michael Savage on welfare recipients: "these couch-warming leeches . . . have the nerve to whine") to, well, just about everyone (Phil Gramm: "We have sort of become a nation of whiners").

There is, however, an upside to Palin's presence, an important reminder to working moms: Feminism is not just about having the opportunity to do it all. It's also about having the support to do as much as you can. This is why, in the end, feminism needs to be tied to not just an identity, but to an ideology that encourages that support. Sarah Palin's free-market feminism fails that mission on almost every count, diminishing the trade-offs and sacrifices that haunt working moms—even a couple of the TNR variety juggling over a holiday weekend to put their frustrations into words.

Katherine Marsh

Blitzerkrieg

Cable news's tallest midgets.

On the night I first saw his beard in person, it was no easier for me to accept what I empirically knew to be true: that, during the 2008 primary season, Wolf Blitzer—*Wolf Freakin' Blitzer*—presided over the number one election-night news show on cable television. The man's so devoid of charisma that you can picture him reporting, in his endearing monotone, that a comet is headed straight for CNN studios and that he'll be prematurely robbed of his molecular composition and the chance to ever see his family again in seven, six, just five seconds now. In this era of outsized personality and hectoring opinion, he doesn't have catchphrases. He doesn't call guests liars. If there are any thrills going up his leg, he's kind enough not to share the information with us. Every morning, he runs five miles on the treadmill and drinks freshly squeezed orange juice because he's 60, and hosting primary coverage that starts at four p.m. and usually ends some time the next day is physically demanding work.

And yet, this winter and spring, Blitzer *did* preside over the number one election-night news show on cable television. Aside from scoring higher ratings than its main competitors, Fox News and MSNBC, during all but one of the early primaries (it lost Florida, which was uncontested among Democrats, to Fox), CNN won the first quarter of the year among the most sought-after demographic, 25- to 54-year-olds, for the first time since 2001. Fox reclaimed the top spot in the second quarter, largely because its primetime shows are still more popular and there were fewer primaries. But, while Fox's second quarter viewership dropped off 1 percent from 2007, CNN's was up 24.

There are Jewish holidays that celebrate lesser miracles. The first few years of the decade were disastrous for the network: In the aftermath of Bush's election and then September 11, CNN couldn't decide how much of Fox's formula to ape, and, as a result, the network just seemed confused. Its viewers disappeared, and Time Warner's profits went with them. There were rumors of a sale or merger with ABC News.

Anastasia Vasilakis

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Soul-searching was needed. Fox had already staked out the right, and, around 2006, when it became cool to be a Democrat again, MSNBC started to tack left. Their ideological positioning seemed shrewd: Conventional wisdom held that, if cable news networks wanted to stay relevant—as well as profitable—they'd have to follow the British newspaper model and harbor their partisan sympathies loudly and proudly. And, in some respects, this prediction proved correct. MSNBC has gone from a distant, morose third to a much closer, plucky third since Keith Olbermann and company started bashing Republicans; Fox may have lost a step, but it still draws the largest number of viewers; and whenever Lou Dobbs, CNN's sole flamethrower, unleashes another screed against brown people, it's ratings gold.

But, Dobbs aside, CNN couldn't bring itself to adopt the same strategy. Instead, it doubled down on even-handed, data-heavy political coverage. On a commercial level, the result has been an improbable ratings resurrection. On a watching-from-home level, the result has fluctuated wildly: The coverage can be nicely informative one moment, then bland, pedantic, and painfully hackish the next. And yet, when compared to grumpy Fox and self-righteous MSNBC, CNN's election coverage may well be the least of three evils. If nothing else, it has raised the possibility that there might be a future for neutral journalism on cable after all. The network says it has the best political team on television so many times a day that it feels strange even considering it. But I think we're going to have to come to grips with the fact that it's true.

When I traveled to CNN's New York studios on the night of the Pennsylvania primary in April, the first thing that jumped out at me was the network's emphasis on technology. I've been in a fair number of newsrooms, but none quite so bright, or with so many things fighting for your eyes' attention. There were 50 monitors in the studio displaying ever-shifting flag graphics or poll numbers or CNN logos; a 20-foot-by-ten-foot "Video Wall" that Wolf interacts with and that necessitates so much work it has its very own control room of about a dozen people (this, in addition to the main control room one floor below); and an absurd number of fixed and roving cameras (twelve, to be precise) recording it all.

The correspondents, meanwhile, spent most of their non-speaking time fiddling with PDAs and PCs. I saw Alex Castellanos clicking through Wikipedia; Donna Brazile told me she looks at *Real Clear Politics*; and Jeffrey Toobin, a legal analyst for the network who pleaded with management to let him join the political team this election, consults *Talking Points Memo* and *Daily Kos*. Paul Begala, an unreconstructed Clintonian, says he sometimes got 20 e-mails a night from Barack Obama's campaign spokesman, Bill Burton, trying to set him straight. Brazile received upward of 400 e-mails during primary evenings—some from campaign professionals, some from strangers (whom she willingly engages; try it), and at least one from Castellanos asking if the kitchen was still open at the Empire Hotel up the street.

Though this flurry of background activity might look peculiar—there's really no reason we need to see Begala attack his BlackBerry behind Gloria Borger's left ear when she's analyzing delegate math—it's very much a part of the network's plan. In a creepy display of corporate synchronicity, nearly everybody I spoke to at CNN said something along the lines of: We're not interested in technology just for technology's sake; it's all in the service of providing information to the viewer.

And, you know what, I buy that. During primary season, the network offered far more hard data—the kind of stuff you're looking for on election night—in a far more compelling way than the other networks, where commentary is king. Much of that can be attributed to the gizmos. It reminds me of what Hendrik Hertzberg wrote in these pages 24 years ago: that television "is best when it mediates least."

Consider the example of the "Magic Wall," easily the finest innovation in cable news this year. D.C. bureau chief David Bohrman, who has led the network's techno-push, discovered the Wall—which is also used by military contractors looking to graphically demonstrate connections between terrorist networks—at what he called "a non-classified spy conference" in Texas during the fall of 2007. He immediately knew he had to have one. Basically, it's a giant iPod touch-screen (or, for sports fans, a John Madden telestrator on steroids) that allows you to move maps and ballot counts around in such a way as to be maximally informative. For instance, on Pennsylvania night, John King, the former AP reporter whose mastery of the Wall is expert bordering on sensual, put up a map of the state and, by pushing his index fingers out away from each other, zoomed in on the southeast corner. He then drew a line around Philadelphia and its suburbs, where, he explained, Obama needed to win by 100,000 votes to have any chance of taking Pennsylvania. It wasn't a landmark moment in TV history, but it delivered useful information in a visually graceful way.

And, as Roland Martin—a Chicago-based journalist who has assumed a more prominent role for CNN this year—suggested to me, that's the kind of tech-enhanced coverage we should expect in 2008. "If you just put up a chalkboard," he said, "the general public would look at you as if your ass was nuts."

Of course, with so many hours to fill, the network's election coverage is about more than just the gadgets and number-crunching; it's about the conversation—and that's where things start to get tricky. "The thing about me is, I love to cook and I love to eat," Martin reveals in a quiet moment. He often speaks with his left- and right-hand fingertips touching gently in front of him, like an infomercial salesman who's just turned on the earnest. He continues, "Our election coverage every night is like a great dinner party. … You have a great mix of people who see the world differently, and it can be combustible and exciting."

Let's leave aside the question of whether it'd be pleasurable to share a table with some of these folks (Bill Bennett!); what's irrefutably true about CNN's dinner party is that it's gigantic (there are so many political consultants milling in and around the Election Center that it makes you feel bad for the two or three others who weren't invited) and far more devoted to equal time than the other networks.

On Pennsylvania night, CNN's panel of consultants was on the verge of breaking into a juicy, heated exchange on the differences between Pastor John Hagee and Reverend Jeremiah Wright, when Campbell Brown intervened and said, "Wait, wait, wait; I've got to go Democrat, Republican, Democrat, Republican." It was obviously an insane thing to do—a real-time glimpse into how banal and clipped responses have triumphed over a brand of discourse that might, in some small way, approach honesty. But the decency in her request—there *should* be some nod toward even-handedness in election coverage—points directly to the biggest challenge facing CNN: How does it make balanced conversation interesting?

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The network sure hasn't figured it out yet. This has only become more apparent since the primaries ended, and punditry has once again become more important than straight data delivery. And yet, for a little while longer, I hope that viewers resist the partisan pleasures of Fox and MSNBC. Because if CNN somehow hits on the right formula for commentary, and people respond in the way they did to its primary coverage, the network will have at least delayed the complete polarization of cable news—wherein we all just retreat to our ideological hovels, never to engage with the other side again. Who knew the absurdly vanilla integrity of Wolf Blitzer would be our last, best hope?

Greg Veis

Bushed

How neocons made liberals wary of idealism.

In early November 1956, Soviet tanks swarmed into Hungary to crush an insurgency that had just thrown off Moscow's yoke. In the United States, where the presidential election was days away, the Democratic nominee was the professorial and sometimes equivocal Adlai Stevenson—the epitome of the peace-loving, arms control–pushing, diplomacy-advocating liberalism that Republicans loved to tar as squishy-soft. In Hungary's case, however, Stevenson didn't flinch.

At a Cleveland campaign stop, having just learned of the news, the candidate forthrightly pledged America's solidarity with Hungary's revolutionaries, "a brave and determined and desperate people … struggling against enormous odds to shake themselves loose from Russian imperialism." Stevenson chided the Eisenhower administration for its sham policy of "rolling back" communism, but he didn't let the U.S. campaign trail overshadow the European theater. "As a spokesman for the Democratic Party," he affirmed, "I am sure we want and pray that President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles can make our influence and desire for right and justice felt once more, for we are Americans first and Democrats second."

No one denounced Stevenson as a warmonger or a me-too Republican. His heartfelt support for the Hungarians was fully in line with mid-century liberalism. *The New York Times*, for one, began its editorial with a simple declarative sentence: "We accuse the Soviet Government of murder." For liberals, an instinctive revulsion toward the invasion joined naturally with a ready sympathy

PAUL FREDRICK
MENSTYLE
Crisp, comfortable white 100% Cotton Pinpoint Oxford dress shirt at a
SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE...
$19.95
Reg. $39.50-$49.50
Your Collar Style:
Six Collar Choices.
Your Cuff:
Button or French Cuff.
Your Fit:
Regular, Big & Tall or Trim.
Your Size:
14 1/2" x 32" to 20" x 37".
Shown:
Straight Collar, #120 $19.95
Satin Necktie, #TU1505 $49.50
Specify promotional code E8FSN3.
New customer offer. Limit four shirts per customer. Shipping charges extra. Cannot be combined with other offers. Expires 10/31/08.
Order Today! Call 1-800-247-1417 or visit PaulFredrick.com/exclusive

One day, you may have to tell your grandchildren stories about places like this.
Experts predict that within 100 years, natural lands and water resources will become scarce. Climate change will irreversibly alter the planet. And the habitats that support all life could be lost forever.
Support our mission to protect the future of our natural world. To make a difference that lasts, join The Nature Conservancy.
Log onto www.nature.org today or call (800) 842-8905.
Iguazu National Park, Parana State, Brazil.
Image ©Scott Warren
The Nature Conservancy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for a foreign people rallying for freedom under the American flag.

There are important differences between today's crisis in Georgia and the crisis in Hungary. But one of the more salient is this: Where once liberals took the lead in decrying the subjugation of foreign peoples yearning for democracy, this time too many on our side of the aisle either lagged or lost their way. When Soviet tanks barreled into Georgia in early August on the absurd pretext of stopping "genocide," the first instinct of many liberals was either to lob verbal water balloons at President Bush and John McCain or to retreat behind a scrim of pox-on-both-their-houses pseudo-sophistication.

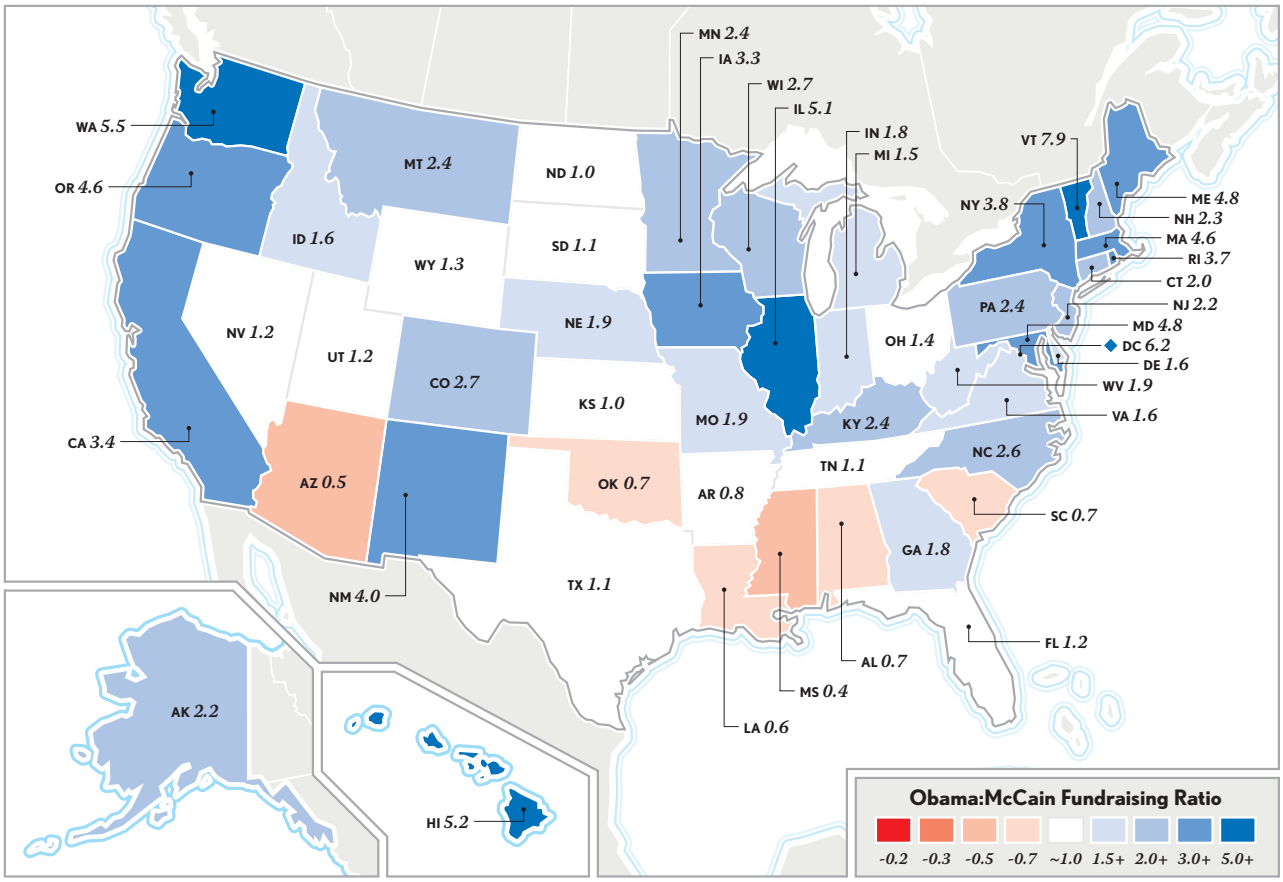
For many, blaming the Republicans took precedence. Diminishing themselves, liberals tried to make sport of McCain's appropriation of Wikipedia boilerplate for a speech and make hay of his aide Randy Scheunemann's lobbying for the Georgian government. Or they went after Bush (or American policy in general) for "provoking" Russia by expanding NATO, supporting Kosovo's independence, and embracing Georgia's pro-Western premier, Mikheil Saakashvili. "[W]e should acknowledge that at least some of the blame lies, as it does so often, with our own hubris," Michael Hirsh wrote in *Newsweek*, faulting "Washington's active support of the Orange and Rose Revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia and its feckless encouragement of their Westernized, pro-NATO presidents." When the right language happened to come from McCain—who declared, "We are all Georgians now"—the general response among liberal pundits was to scoff. Writing on *The Washington Post*'s website, Andres Martinez told the senator to speak for himself. "I am not a Georgian," he insisted, deriding the "over-the-top rhetoric about democracy and liberty" from McCain and Bush. Blogger Matt Yglesias, writing under the aegis of the Center for American Progress, called the statement "empty political sloganeering," "downright irresponsible," and "mawkish sentimentality."

Many liberals took pains to find fault on both sides, rather than focusing on Russian aggression. Indeed, Barack Obama, though he later righted himself, bungled his initial response by implying that both sides deserved equal blame ("Now is the time for Georgia and Russia to show restraint . . ."). Robert Farley, a regular contributor to *The American Prospect*'s website, wrote on his personal blog, "Both the Russian and Georgian cases are generally unsympathetic, but I guess that I'm mildly less sympathetic to the Georgians." And longtime commentator William Pfaff wrote, "The accompanying Washington blather is about saving plucky and democratic Georgia from the Russian wrath that has fallen upon it for attacking

THE DONOR GAP

Barack Obama has out-fund-raised John McCain in 43 states, according to filings with the Federal Election Commission. Obama has a large advantage in some states where the GOP usually dominates the fund-raising race. He's done particularly well in the Mountain West—even out-raising McCain in Utah.

Nate Silver



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

two even smaller and pluckier Caucasian enclaves, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which reject what they consider Georgian oppression"—then asked rhetorically, "So who is democratic and who is not?"

Perhaps worst of all were those who seemed to take a measure of satisfaction in Putin's punishment of Georgia. "The bloody conflict over South Ossetia will have been good for something at least if it teaches two lessons," wrote Anatol Lieven of the New America Foundation. "The first is that Georgia will never now get South Ossetia and Abkhazia back. The second is for the West: it is not to make promises that it neither can, nor will, fulfill when push comes to shove."

There were key exceptions, of course. For diplomats and policy hands steeped in the situation—Ronald Asmus, Richard Holbrooke, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Strobe Talbott—an appreciation of geopolitical complexities and strategic intricacies did not entail the abdication of principled judgment. Ironically, those from whom we expect abstracted analysis had no trouble identifying the fundamental issues at stake in Georgia, while those whose role normally includes articulating moral sentiments (intellectuals and highbrow journalists) or venting gut reactions (columnists and bloggers) tended to counsel inaction from a pose of worldly-wise fretfulness about the situation's intractability.

Why should the statements of liberal pundits trouble us? It's not because their criticisms are necessarily wrong. Only a jingoist would deny that U.S. policies deserve cold scrutiny; only a Manichaean would insist that Georgia's government is pristine. On the complex policy questions of whether to expand NATO or shrink the G-8 or extend missile defenses to Poland—or even whether to take a "hard" or a "soft" line—good arguments can be found on various sides, and I, for one, don't claim to know the best answers.

No, the problem with these first reactions was that they didn't stop to consider the more primary liberal principles at stake: respect for international law; compassion for a nation under attack; and, above all, sympathy for a people who have been looking to the United States as a model of democracy—precisely what liberals say we want the world to do. The failure of many liberals to recoil instinctively at Putin's invasion or to express solidarity with Georgia bespeaks a larger neglect of our guiding ideals—a reluctance to stand up for liberty, democracy, human rights, and respect for law, whatever course of diplomatic action we ultimately decide should follow. There was a time when liberals felt affinity with democrats around the world, and weren't shy about saying so. These days, we seem too ambivalent or hardhearted to offer even rhetorical support to our fellow liberals in distant places. What has changed?

FOR ONE THING, partisanship. Encouraged by cable television, talk radio, and the Internet, public discourse has degenerated into a crude taking of sides. Partisanship can be salutary, but when it becomes automatic, it chains us to party lines, even when those lines clash with our beliefs. It clouds our vision, filtering distant events through the lens of the permanent campaign. During Watergate, William F. Buckley concluded that so few of his fellow conservatives were willing to acknowledge Richard Nixon's crimes because they didn't want to "wake up in the morning and find that they are in agreement with a particular conclusion reached by *The New York Times*." Today's political culture has redoubled those fears on all sides, so that liberals dread waking up to find ourselves in agreement with *The Weekly Standard*. Focused on the petty partisan politics surrounding the Georgia crisis, too many liberals applied the dubious dictum that the enemy of my enemy is my friend (or at worst a misunderstood rational actor entitled to the benefit of the doubt). A reflexive distrust of "neocon" foreign policy led them to mitigate Putin's viciousness and to shrug off Georgia's sad fate as the predictable price of poking the bear.

The war in Iraq not only honed these partisan reflexes but drove many liberals to a wholesale embrace of the kind of cruel realism that they once considered anathema. Back in the Clinton years, liberals came close to shedding their Vietnam Syndrome, growing comfortable with an internationalist foreign policy consistent with international law. But, after September 11 and during the run-up to the Iraq war, the Bush administration hijacked the liberal vocabulary of democracy, liberty, and human rights. It then proceeded to make a mockery of this rhetoric by thumbing its nose at the United Nations, curbing civil liberties at home, and torturing suspected enemies. Ashamed of the deeds done in the name of their principles, liberals turned not just on Bush but on the very espousal of those principles. They ceded them to the neocons, and ran as far away from foreign policy idealism as they could.

Suddenly, realism looked newly appealing. Unlike the hard left, which viewed the Iraq war from the get-go as an imperialist undertaking, antiwar liberals frequently made the case against deposing Saddam in prudential terms, contending that the mere threat of force could contain and even disarm him. Republican realists like Brent Scowcroft, who spoke out against the impending invasion, provided ideological cover. But this beneficial small-r realism—a commonsense commitment to evidence, accountability, and the judicious weighing of costs and benefits—soon curdled into a doctrinaire Realism of the sort that used to appall liberals when it was preached and practiced by the likes of Henry Kissinger.

Liberals, in short, seem content these days to derive their political analysis entirely from patterns of thought forged in the Bush years. If every foreign crisis is another Iraq waiting to happen, then every expression of feeling for an oppressed people becomes propaganda for neocon warmakers; every thought of intervention becomes a prescription for disaster; and no cause—not even democracy—is more urgent than opening the American people's eyes to the deceptions and dark motives of our leaders.

But our eyes are now open. After years of brandishing our skepticism, we should recognize our success. Our anti-Bush bona fides are beyond question. No one on the left has fallen for anything Bush has said in a long time. (The right doesn't follow him in lockstep anymore, either.) Liberals don't need to subordinate our commiseration with the Georgian people to another chance to batter the Iraq war's enthusiasts. What's more, by continuing to let our anger over Iraq and Bush control our view of international affairs, we limit our capacity to defend what we really believe in: not the higher wisdom of realpolitik but the cause of liberalism.

It's understandable that in these times liberals might hesitate before rushing to wave the banner of democracy promotion, given how Bush has abused it. But we should remember that it was our banner in the first place. As we prepare to sweep our current president out the door in favor of what will in all likelihood be an Obama administration, we are, quite unnecessarily, handing Bush a final, enduring victory: We are allowing our judgments and ideas to be dictated not by our own principles and beliefs, but by his.

David Greenberg

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ladies' Man

The backslapping, bloviating hero of women's rights.

FRED STREBEIGH

In January 2000, when the Supreme Court assembled to hear oral arguments attacking a pivotal section of the Violence Against Women Act, Joseph Biden was front and center. VAWA legally protects women from domestic abuse and gender-based violence, and Biden has proclaimed it the "most important legislative accomplishment" of his Senate career. But, long before the law had reached a congressional vote, Chief Justice William Rehnquist had attacked the "Civil Rights for Women" section, with which Biden sought to define gender-motivated crimes as bias or hate crimes.

As Rehnquist prepared to open the morning's first argument, Biden did not sit somberly. Rather, the senator swiveled in his seat (conspicuous to most of us in the court's press section), smiling cheerily and talking with nearby allies, including numerous female attorneys who had helped him shape the bill. Although Biden had no official role, he sought to signal that—in what he described that day as a "titanic struggle"—neither he nor the women around him would go quietly in defeat.

AP PHOTO/JAE C. HONG

These days, many women voters are more likely to perceive Biden as a spoiler than as a supporter. Since his selection last month as Barack Obama's running mate, Biden has been pitted against women, first taking the job that many Hillary Clinton supporters felt was her due, then facing off against another historic woman, Sarah Palin, who could become the first female vice president of the United States. With his 30-plus years in the Senate, Biden can sound like the member of a male-only club, an impression reinforced by old-boy gaffes—from joking that his wife's doctorate "is a problem" to referring to Palin as "good-looking."

But the irony of this assessment is that Biden has some of the best feminist bona fides around. The mostly untold story of Biden's fight to support the "Civil Rights For Women" section of VAWA provides a window into his work for women, its origins, and how the defense of women's rights fits into his political worldview. Women voters may yet find something to cheer: In fighting for the legislation, Biden showed he was willing to trust the guidance of women activists and women judges, and then to contend against fierce and mostly male resistance in Washington, particularly from the Supreme Court.

In the spring of 1990, a new staffer in the offices of the Senate Judiciary Committee received a surprise project from her boss. Joe Biden wanted her to figure out what Congress should do to reduce violent crimes against women. Victoria Nourse, the staffer, was then just six years out of law school and unaware of Biden's past efforts along similar lines. In 1981, as he recalls in his 2007 memoir, *Promises to Keep*, Biden had pushed for a provision opposing laws that treat rape within marriage as a lesser crime than other rapes. Biden's effort led to a rebuff by Senator Jeremiah Denton of Alabama, who replied, "Damn it, when you get married, you kind of expect you're going to get a little sex."

The late '80s, Biden noticed, showed a rise in violent crimes against young women. Then, in December 1989, a man walked into a university classroom in Montreal with a hunting rifle, divided the students by sex, yelled that the women were all "a bunch of feminists," and killed 14 of them. Biden's aide Ron Klain handed the Senator an article in the *Los Angeles Times* by a friend who had clerked with Klain the year before at the Supreme Court, Lisa Heinzerling (now professor of law at Georgetown). Heinzerling connected that murder of "feminists" to a gap in U.S. law. Federal law tracking hate crimes targeted only, she wrote, a "victim's race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation." Thus, she argued, "if a woman is beaten, raped or killed because she is a woman, this is not considered a crime of hate"—a legal loophole "welcome to no one but the misogynist."

Biden posed a challenge to Nourse: figure out what Congress should do, and start by looking at the marital-rape issue he had tried to tackle a decade earlier. In the legal reading room of the Library of Congress, Nourse found a twist that shocked them both. Some states had extended the marital-rape exemption to become a date-rape exemption that downgraded a rape charge if a woman was a man's "voluntary social companion." One state that had done so was Delaware, where Joe and Jill Biden were raising a young daughter.

In 1972, Biden's first wife, Neilia, and infant daughter, Naomi, had died in a car crash, and, afterward, he had made a decision, despite his political career, to raise his children in their home state. From this point on, for Biden, a big part of politics became personal. Now he was learning that his daughter was legally more vulnerable to date rape in Wilmington than in, say, Washington or Arlington. When Nourse reported this to Biden, she saw a "look of horror on his face."

Looking for a solution, Nourse drafted a proposal for the "Civil Rights for Women" section of what would become VAWA. (The bill's other two parts, "Safe Streets for Women" and "Safe Homes for Women," proposed funding and legal support to assist law enforcement and protect women from domestic abuse.) The goals of the civil rights section were grand: make women

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"free from crimes of violence motivated by the victim's gender." But its method was more modest: give victims of such violence the right to sue their attackers in federal court. Nourse grounded the section constitutionally both in the equal-protection guarantee of the Fourteenth Amendment and in the Commerce clause (partly via language echoing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, itself upheld by the Court under the Commerce clause).

Even before Biden introduced VAWA at Senate hearings on June 20, 1990, Nourse began seeking allies among women's groups in New York and Washington, D.C. Both she and Biden recall that "inside the-beltway women's groups" did not leap to assist. In *Promises to Keep*, Biden quotes one group member replying, "Oh, Victoria, you're a nice little girl, but you work for Joseph Biden. Why should we believe you?" Such distrust, he thought, came because he was not "pure" in his support for abortion—opposing federal funding of abortion though supporting a woman's right to choose.

Fortunately for VAWA, Nourse found a significant ally in the association of attorneys called the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund and particularly with a staff attorney named Sally Goldfarb (now a professor at Rutgers School of Law-Camden). Goldfarb set out to form a coalition to gather broad support for the bill.

Biden, in the meantime, held a second Senate hearing on violence against women in August 1990. As he listened to a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania (where his son Beau was still a senior) talk about efforts to help victims of acquaintance rape, Biden became energized. After hearing the woman say that some male students had harassed her with "nightly phone threats," Biden launched into what Goldfarb believed was an unplanned but revealing narrative. He told of trying to convince his wife Jill, who drove to night school for her graduate degree classes, to park in a place that was safer but illegal. In response, he said he got "almost a punch in the nose." Trying to work out why, he spoke of his wife's "frustration and anger" that she should need to take precautions no man would take. He linked her anger to her sense of "lost control."

Goldfarb felt she was hearing a man grasp a fundamental understanding about "the lack of control that is experienced not only by women who are themselves victims, but by all the women who have to constrain their daily activities to avoid becoming a victim." Biden was expressing, she thought, the "basic insight of the civil rights provision—that violence against women deprives women of equality."

Biden, too, portrayed himself as a man surprised by new knowledge. In Delaware, he found that victims of rape were beginning to "literally stop me in the street" to tell their stories and give thanks for VAWA. More than half, he said, spoke of a "need to regain control," which Biden evidently understood. The loss of safety, home, and control that he had felt himself when he lost his first wife and daughter was something that these women had also been forced to grapple with in the wake of their rapes.

For Biden and his staff, the great surprise came when VAWA—and particularly its civil rights section—came under fire, long before any congressional vote on the bill. In the summer of 1991, Chief Justice Rehnquist appointed a four-judge ad hoc committee to report on VAWA to an administrative body that he chaired, the Judicial Conference of the United States. The conference soon challenged the civil rights section on a variety of grounds, including the dubious projection that the federal caseload might double if even a tenth of domestic complaints became VAWA cases, causing "major state-federal jurisdictional problems and disruptions." Trying to stave off condemnation, Biden replied fiercely in a letter to the committee's chair: "I will not mince words: As author of the legislation, I have stated that … the bill does not federalize divorce law or domestic relations cases any more than any other civil rights law does."

Undeterred, Rehnquist attacked VAWA in his 1991 "year-end report" opposing congressional additions of work to his courts unless "critical to meeting important national interests." In early 1992, he made clear to the American Bar Association (ABA) that he was pressuring Congress against VAWA and added, "I urge your attention to this issue also." If Rehnquist could sway the ABA, Biden feared, congressional support for VAWA might evaporate.

At this point, the coalition of women Biden was working with realized that they needed to get judges on their side. Goldfarb and a colleague reached out to the one group, only about a dozen years old and far from radical, that might offer a counterbalance, the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ). After spirited debate—one judge reportedly warned her colleagues that if they supported VAWA they would be seen as an adjunct for the National Organization for Women—the association's board voted to present a resolution supporting VAWA's civil rights section to its full membership. A few months later, the ABA voted down an anti-VAWA resolution.

Soon, female judges working to save Biden's civil rights initiative began working to reshape it. They pushed Nourse and Goldfarb into accepting language that would assure detractors that VAWA's civil rights section would not overburden federal courts and would pass constitutional muster. The judges urged that the civil rights section apply only to crimes that were also "due, at least in part, to an animus based on the victim's gender." The key term "animus," or purpose, served to ground VAWA more strongly in early civil rights law and the Fourteenth Amendment's promise of equality.

With that language in place, VAWA easily passed Congress in 1994. Contrary to fears mongered by the chief justice, the law did not cause cases to flood federal courts, perhaps partly because a woman's case had to meet the limiting language of "animus." The animus requirement helped defend VAWA against legal challenges also, and, by the end of 1999, the civil rights section had been upheld as constitutional in 17 of the 18 district courts that ruled on the question.

But, in 2000, one of these cases, *Brzonkala* v. *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*, finally reached the Supreme Court. Two male college students had allegedly raped a freshman named Christy Brzonkala within 30 minutes of her meeting them. When the first man finished raping her, he allegedly warned her that she "better not have any fucking diseases." A while later, in a university dining hall, he allegedly said that he "liked to get girls drunk and fuck the shit out of them." Strong "animus based on the victim's gender" seemed present, and Brzonkala brought suit under VAWA. Her assailants then challenged the law as unconstitutional.

During the years VAWA had begun its route to victories in lower courts, Rehnquist had extended what commentators have described as his "federalism revolution"—an effort to diminish the reach of the national government. The Court first undercut congressional authority to make law under the Commerce clause in a controversial 1995 case called *Lopez* that overturned a law passed by Congress to keep guns out of schools. Then the Court undercut congressional authority to make law under the Fourteenth Amendment in a 1997 decision about religion called *City of Boerne* v. *Flores*. By the time Biden faced off with Rehnquist at the Court, the civil rights section was in trouble.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On January 11, 2000, Biden stood without cheer in cold rain on the steps of the Supreme Court. He had just heard Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, whose vote he viewed as key to the survival of the civil rights section, suggest that the Court might have been "helped" if VAWA had contained a better "hook" to interstate commerce—an ominous and even ironic request, since the VAWA of 1994 was hooked solidly to the Commerce clause before 1995 when *Lopez* made the clause harder to hook to.

Standing beneath an umbrella that carried the seal of the Senate, Biden made an argument for women's equality that VAWA's defenders could not make inside the Court because the Court did not wish to hear arguments based on the Fourteenth Amendment. "Men don't choose not to take jobs" for fear of gender-motivated violence, Biden said, but "women do alter their life patterns." Then he returned to his own stake in the law—adopting a "personal is political" stance close to the heart of Biden's political values as well as much feminism. The effort to protect women against gender-based violence, he argued, "empowers my daughter and granddaughters."

The civil rights section's effort lost, however, by a vote of 5–4 in the Court after Rehnquist reportedly lobbied O'Connor for her vote. Although the rest of VAWA remained law, it had lost the part that Biden most valued—the part that strove explicitly for equality.

Joe Biden may have lost in a titanic struggle to expand the civil rights of women. But, along the way, he showed himself ready to follow the lead of female attorneys and judges. As Victoria Nourse told me in a recent e-mail from her desk at Emory Law School, where she is now a professor: "[I]n a day and age when Senators were still fondling interns in the Senate elevator, he not only protected me, he listened to me, my legal advice, and by extension, all the women who talked to me."

No one can pretend that getting Biden as vice president lifts women's spirits as high as they may go with the election of the first woman president. But no one will doubt that, on that wet day on the slippery Supreme Court steps, beneath his senatorial umbrella, Joe Biden was there—trying to stand tall for the rights of women. ◆

Fred Strebeigh teaches nonfiction writing at Yale University. This article is adapted from Equal: Women Reshape American Law, *forthcoming in February 2009.*

Constitutional Biden

Civil liberties' greatest salesman.

JEFFREY ROSEN

The Obama-Biden slate is historic in many ways, but for law professors it has a special cachet: It's the first time that professors of constitutional law have occupied both slots on a ticket. Barack Obama was a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School, and Joe Biden has been an adjunct professor at Widener University School of Law since 1991. More to the point, it's the most civil-libertarian ticket ever fielded by a major U.S. political party.

Moments after the September 11 attacks, as Biden watched his colleagues evacuate the Capitol, a reporter asked him whether America would have to revisit the way it protects our public institutions. "I hope that's not true," Biden replied, according to his autobiography. "[If] we have to alter our civil liberties, change the way we function, then we have truly lost the war."

It was a telling response, given the situation unfolding around him—and a perfect reflection of his career. As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and the veteran of some of the most bruising Supreme Court confirmation battles, Biden did more than champion civil liberties. He developed an uncanny knack for making them politically palatable to Middle America. In fact, during the Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas hearings, he shepherded a new and expansive conception of privacy into public discourse. This gift for marketing civil liberties won't just serve Obama well as he rebuts Republican attacks during the campaign; if the ticket prevails, Biden's instincts will help guide the selection of judges and the challenging task of reconstructing civil liberties after the assault of the last eight years.

ANTHONY RUSSO

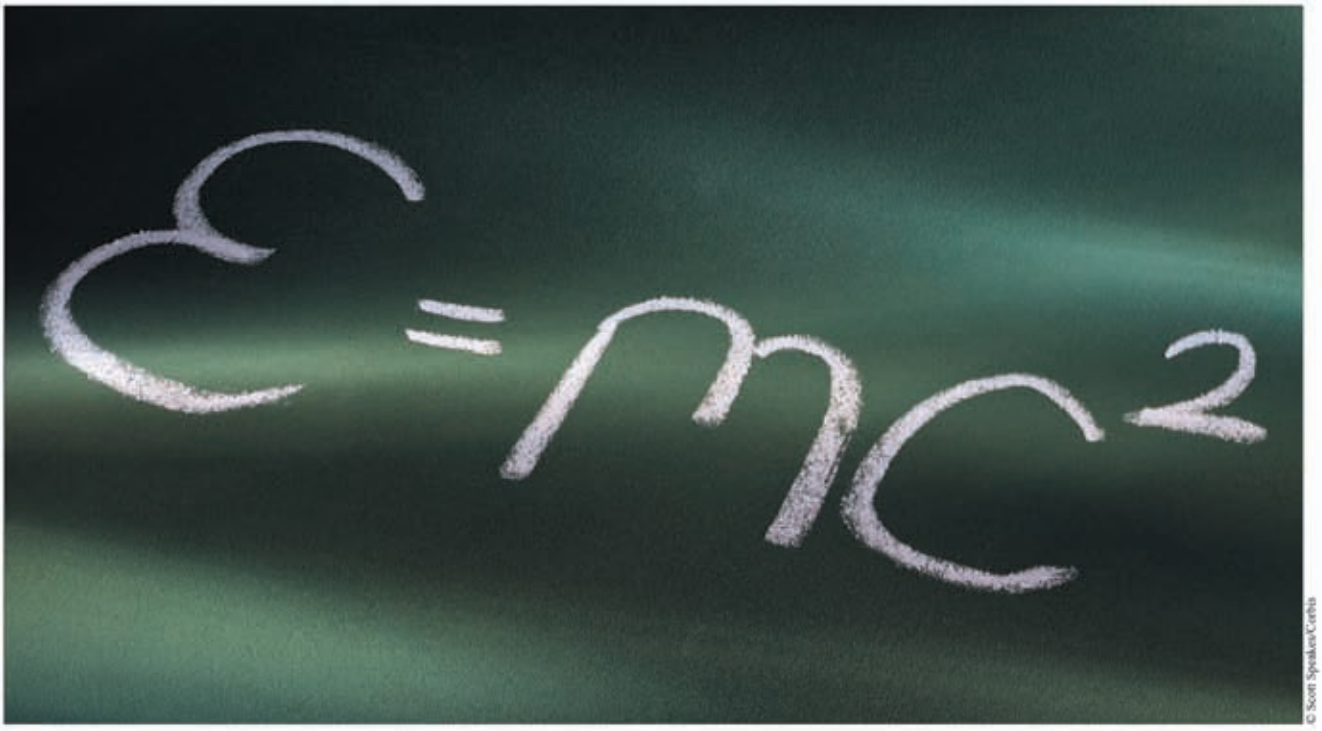
In his autobiography, *Promises to Keep*, Biden argues that he derived his approach to government from his working-class, Catholic upbringing in the 1950s. His father, who managed a car dealership, lectured him at the dinner table about the horrors of the Holocaust and once quit a job when he saw the boss, at an office Christmas party, throw silver dollars on the floor to watch his employees scramble. "The one thing my mother could not stand was meanness," Biden writes. "She once shipped my brother off with instructions to bloody the nose of a kid who was picking on smaller kids. . . . Religious figures and authority figures got no exemption. They abuse their power, you bloody their nose." (In an autobiographical video, Obama told the Democratic Convention that his mother taught him a similar lesson.)

This visceral distaste for abuses of power has undergirded his passionate defense of the right to privacy. Call it the blue-collar view of civil liberties: You defend the little guy against the bullying intrusions of government.

During Robert Bork's Supreme Court confirmation hearings in 1987, Biden's distinctive view of civil liberties set him on a collision course with liberal interest groups. (I worked for Biden as an intern on the Judiciary Committee during the Bork fight.) Biden always had an ambivalent relationship with these groups because of his deviations from liberal orthodoxy: He had attacked busing as a "liberal train wreck" and earned the distrust of women's groups with his middle-of-the-road position on choice, voting to ban so-called "partial-birth" abortions even as he opposed constitutional amendments to ban abortion.

A broad swath of the left wanted to use the Bork hearings as the stage for an apocalyptic showdown over abortion. "We're going to wage an all-out frontal assault like you've never seen before on this nominee," promised Kate Michelman of the National Abortion Rights Action League. In an early meeting over Bork, Biden told the groups, "If I lead this fight, it will not be a single-issue campaign." (This pledge was promptly leaked to news-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



© Scott Speaker/Corbis

Understand the Most Brilliant Mind of the 20th Century

Albert Einstein is undoubtedly one of the most brilliant minds of the 20th century. His ideas on theories of space and time and his earth-shattering equation $E=mc^2$ revolutionized the face of physics. He also achieved fame and influence as a philosopher and humanitarian, involving himself in some of the most profound issues of his day. **Albert Einstein: Physicist, Philosopher, Humanitarian** offers you a wide-ranging intellectual biography of this iconic scientist, genius, and champion of social justice. These 24 insightful lectures are taught by Dr. Don Howard, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame and a former assistant editor and contributing editor for the *Collected Papers of Albert Einstein.*

More than just a biography of Einstein's life, this riveting, all-encompassing course gives you an inside look at how this brilliant thinker arrived at his revolutionary breakthroughs. You explore Einstein's philosophical views on scientific issues and investigate some of his well-known thought experiments. You also gain a wealth of insights into facets of Einstein's life, including his enthusiasm as an inventor, his support for the development of a safe haven for displaced Jews, and his work with the American Civil Rights Movement. By the conclusion of these lectures, you'll be better acquainted with the *complete* Einstein—his scientific ideas, his personal philosophies, his thought processes, and his impact on both his own time and ours.

This course is one of The Great Courses®, a noncredit recorded college lecture series from The Teaching Company®. Award-winning professors of a wide array of subjects in the sciences and the liberal arts have made more than 250 college-level courses that are available now on our website.

ACT NOW!

1-800-TEACH-12

www.TEACH12.com/6nrep

Albert Einstein: Physicist, Philosopher, Humanitarian

Taught by Professor Don Howard, University of Notre Dame

Lecture Titles

1. The Precocious Young Einstein
2. The Development of the Young Physicist
3. The Birth of the Quantum Hypothesis
4. Background to Special Relativity
5. Essentials of Special Relativity
6. From Bern to Berlin
7. Background to General Relativity
8. Essentials of General Relativity
9. From Berlin to Princeton
10. Philosophical Challenge of the New Physics
11. Einstein's Philosophy of Science
12. Zionism, Pacifism, and Internationalism
13. Einstein the Inventor and Musician
14. On the Road to the New Quantum Mechanics
15. Quantum Mechanics and Controversy
16. Einstein in Princeton—The Lonely Quest
17. Is Quantum Mechanics Complete?
18. The Expanding Universe
19. Einstein and the Bomb—Science Politicized
20. From the Manhattan Project to the Cold War
21. A Lifelong Commitment to Social Justice
22. Cosmic Religion and Jewish Identity
23. Einstein and Modernity
24. The Sage of Princeton—Einstein the Icon

Order Today!

Offer expires Friday, November 7, 2008

Albert Einstein: Physicist, Philosopher, Humanitarian
Course No. 8122
24 lectures (30 minutes/lecture)

DVDs ~~$254.95~~ **NOW $69.95**
+ $10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Audio CDs ~~$179.95~~ **NOW $49.95**
+ $10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Audiotapes ~~$129.95~~ **NOW $34.95**
+ $10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Priority Code: 30340

THE TEACHING COMPANY®
The Joy of Lifelong Learning Every Day™
GREAT PROFESSORS, GREAT COURSES, GREAT VALUE GUARANTEED.™

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

David Cowles

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

papers, infuriating the senator and increasing his mistrust of the groups.)

Biden made it clear that he was less interested in abortion than in the right of privacy, recognized in *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*, which protected a married couple's right to use contraception and reaffirmed the right to resist mandatory sterilization. "Look, I don't think *Roe* is great constitutional law; but, if this administration is trying to put someone on the Court just to reverse that decision, they're going to tear this country apart," Biden told his academic advisers, as Mark Gitenstein, Biden's chief counsel at the time, writes in his account of the Bork hearings. "But, to tell you the truth, what concerns me more is what you fellas are saying about his view on the right to privacy. It really concerns me more than abortion."

Although, as late as 1968, Bork had defended *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* on libertarian grounds, Bork had reversed himself by 1971, when he attacked all the "sexual-freedom cases" as an example of what he called the Supreme Court's imposition of "upper-middle-class, college-education, East-West Coast morality." Biden's great insight was that Bork misjudged the attitudes of middle-class Americans toward sexual freedom. In a crucial moment in late August 1987, he recalled talking about Bork's criticism of *Griswold* with a friend and longtime staffer, according to his autobiography. "Could you imagine what would happen," Biden said, "if I went down to Gerardo's restaurant [in Wilmington] and told a group of married couples there after a softball game that I was taking away their right to use birth control?" Biden concluded, "We should make this about privacy," not abortion. To test his instincts, Biden convinced Philip Kurland, a conservative constitutional scholar from the University of Chicago, to accompany him to a shopping mall in Delaware, where Biden walked up to people he knew and asked them if they thought married couples had a right to use contraception. "Of course," they said, looking at him as if he were crazy. When he asked why, all of them said, "The Constitution."

Polls conducted by advisers to Biden's presidential campaign, including Patrick Caddell, confirmed Biden's instincts. Biden and Caddell viewed the Bork fight as a state-by-state battle and were most interested in swing states like Alabama and Pennsylvania, where moderate Republicans and Southern Democrats might be persuaded to oppose Bork. Caddell found that 75 percent of white Southerners were less inclined to support Bork after they learned he had opposed the right to contraception. And unlike abortion, which divided pro-choice women's groups from civil rights groups—whose African American supporters were more socially conservative—privacy proved to be a political winner.

During the Bork hearings, Biden skillfully defended the right to privacy in terms that middle-class Americans understood, even if his constitutional arguments were questionable. "I believe all Americans are born with certain inalienable rights," Biden declared in his opening statement. "As a child of God, I believe my rights are not derived from the Constitution. … They were given to me and each of my fellow citizens by our creator, and they represent the essence of human dignity." Evaluating Biden's performance, R.W. Apple of *The New York Times* concluded that "for the lay audience … Mr. Biden's sweeping invocations of human rights antedating the Constitution were far easier to grasp than Judge Bork's insistent examinations of the purported legal derivations of such rights."

With Biden forcing Bork to confront his unpopular views, the nominee ultimately recanted his criticisms of many controversial Warren Court decisions, disappointing his supporters and unsettling skeptics. Having been, at various points in his career, a socialist, a communist, a libertarian, an originalist, and a Burkean, as Gitenstein writes, Bork gave the impression that he was an inconsistent ideologue who tried on positions like hats. National opposition to Bork doubled after his testimony, with especially dramatic movement among undecided women and Southerners—just as Caddell and Biden had predicted. "The brilliance of the Bork strategy is that it wasn't directed at the elites, it was directed at those people who go for pizza at Gerardo's," Gitenstein told me. "The Republicans thought it was about the Warren Court and exotic rights. But it wasn't about that; it was about regular folks."

During the battle over Clarence Thomas, Biden was similarly determined to focus on the nominee's judicial philosophy and to resist the effort to troll for personal indiscretions. When liberal groups tried to circulate Anita Hill's sexual harassment allegations, Biden insisted that the charges be handled confidentially by the Senate Judiciary Committee. After the allegations leaked, and public demand for her testimony became overwhelming, Biden refused to call at least three witnesses who were ready to corroborate Thomas's interest in pornography, according to Jane Mayer and Jill Abramson's *Strange Justice*. After the Thomas hearings, Biden told an interviewer that he could have "decimated" Thomas by bringing in "the pornography stuff," but "it would have been wrong."

Women's groups remain angry at Biden to this day. If the supporting witnesses had testified, they believe, he would have been defeated. But this is wishful thinking. "In the end, the feminists who cheered Hill on made a terrible miscalculation," Gitenstein writes. "According to polling by *The New York Times*, most women sided with Thomas, not Hill."

Biden calculated that he couldn't defeat Thomas by violating his privacy, and that Democrats could have won more votes by fighting him on the merits. "The groups never understood the strategy we used on Bork: to break off the moderate Republicans and hold the Southern Democrats by focusing on privacy," Gitenstein says. In other words, Biden understood that he couldn't continue to build a case based on Thomas's threat to privacy if the Democrats' own conduct showed how little they valued Thomas's privacy.

How would Biden's blue-collar defense of privacy influence the kinds of Supreme Court nominees he might encourage Obama to appoint? As it happens, Obama and Biden share a belief that the most effective justices have been practical politicians rather than ivory-tower academics. Obama has embraced Earl Warren, the former governor, as a model of the kind of justice he would appoint, noting that Warren understood that segregation had real effects on schoolchildren that went beyond its theoretical indignity. Biden's instincts are similar. "He is a strong advocate of people with practical experience," says Gitenstein. "He thinks there are enough academics up there right now and he likes the idea of practical people. I remember during one of the early Clinton nominations, Mario Cuomo was in play, and Biden would have thought Cuomo was a good choice."

There has never been a national political constituency for civil liberties, which means that the damage of the past eight years can't be reversed without committed leadership from the next White House. And, even with that commitment, restoring civil liberties will be difficult, in light of the Republican knack for tarring concern about government abuse as soft on terrorism. But, with Biden at his side, Obama has more than a like-minded defender of civil liberties; he has one of the nation's most effective spokesmen on their behalf. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

More Radical Than Bush

The full horror of John McCain's economic agenda.

JONATHAN COHN

John Goodman is a conservative economist who thinks all the fuss over people without health insurance is just hooey. As Goodman explained to a reporter from *The Dallas Morning News* last week, everybody can get medical care from an emergency room, so why not just stop tallying the uninsured altogether? "Voilà," Goodman quipped. "Problem solved." Like many far-right policy experts, Goodman had said such things before. But, unlike many far-right policy experts, Goodman isn't just some random wonk. As the *Morning News* noted, Goodman had helped craft McCain's health care plan. In other words, he is a McCain adviser.

Or, at least, he used to be. When Goodman's quote got the attention of reporters, a McCain spokesman issued a terse statement: "John Goodman is not an adviser to this campaign." When that position became untenable—it turns out Goodman had identified himself as an adviser not only to the *Morning News* but also in a recent *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, to which the McCain campaign never objected—the official story changed. Yes, Goodman had offered advice to McCain. But it was on an unpaid, voluntary basis, and McCain had since made clear that Goodman's input was not necessary. "John McCain could not disagree more strongly with Mr. Goodman," a spokesman said. "John McCain believes that addressing the problem of the nation's uninsured is one of our most pressing national priorities." (Goodman has been travelling and unavailable for comment.)

It wasn't the first time this campaign season that McCain distanced himself from a conservative adviser over controversial statements. Former Texas senator Phil Gramm, as a top economic adviser, had far more influence than Goodman. *Fortune* magazine actually called him "McCain's econ brain." But, in June, Gramm told a *Washington Times* reporter that the economy was stronger than most Americans realized. The real problem, he suggested, was a "mental recession"—that "we have sort of become a nation of whiners." Again, Gramm was offering a refrain common among conservatives, who think the press constantly dwells on bad economic news. But did McCain believe it, too? This time, McCain himself issued a denial. "Phil Gramm does not speak for me," he said. "America is in great difficulty. And we are experiencing enormous challenges." Soon Gramm was told his services, too, were no longer required.

Goodman and Gramm had, of course, committed political crimes. But, while they were guilty of ill-chosen rhetoric, they had also told the truth. Whatever their actual advisory roles, their statements were perfectly consistent with the thinking behind McCain's official economic agenda—a mix of supply-side tax cuts and conservative reforms of health care as extreme as any put forth by the Republicans in modern times. McCain might seem an odd vessel for such radicalism, given his notorious opposition to President Bush's first round of tax cuts and his reputation for bucking the GOP. But that all happened before he started running for president again. This campaign has shown how McCain intends to strike a balance between corralling his political base and actually governing the country. And it's not much of a balance. Hard as it may be to believe, after the mounting debt and rising inequality of the Bush era, McCain has indicated he wants to preserve Bush's conservative legacy on economic policy—and then take it even further.

To understand the absurdity of this proposition, it's important to remember just how awful that legacy is. When Bush took office in 2001, the federal government was running substantial surpluses—that is, it was taking in more money than it was spending. It also had a relatively progressive tax code, meaning that the wealthy paid significantly higher rates than the middle class and poor. During the presidential campaign, Al Gore had proposed putting the government's surpluses aside in order to avoid excessive future borrowing, which might slow down the economy, and to prepare for the retirement of baby-boomers, whose aging would soon strain Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Bush rejected that idea, arguing—as many Republicans did—that the government couldn't be trusted with surpluses (i.e., it might spend the money instead). When Bush took office, he pushed for, and won, massive tax breaks. Even though most of the benefits went to the wealthiest, Bush vowed they would promote a strong economy that would ultimately benefit all Americans.

It was the same argument conservatives had been advancing for more than two decades, ever since Ronald Reagan first made supply-side economics a cornerstone of Republican Party dogma. But, as in the past, the theory didn't turn out so well in practice. Predictions of self-financing tax cuts proved utterly wrong, as the Clinton-era budget surpluses quickly turned back into the deficits we still have now. Today, the government is digging itself into a deeper fiscal hole. If allowed to persist, high deficits could actually hinder growth in the long run, as the government soaks up money that businesses would like to borrow for their needs, while making future entitlement costs less manageable. The short-term picture isn't so pretty either. The economy grew following a recession that hit during Bush's first term, but it was a notoriously anemic expansion. Wealthy Americans made out like bandits, but the typical American's wages did not grow at all relative to inflation, something that hadn't happened in any expansionary period since World War II. Job creation under Bush has been the worst since Herbert Hoover's time, and the percentage of families living in poverty has actually increased.

No, you can't blame all of this on the Bush tax cuts. Economic inequality has been growing on its own, and the deficits reflect, in part, high spending on everything from the war to the new Medicare drug benefit. But, if the Bush tax cuts aren't the only reason for our current economic woes, they are an important one. It's hardly surprising that the poor and middle-class would fall behind just as the tax code started showering more benefits on the rich. Nor is it coincidental that deficits would reappear at the very same time tax

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revenues declined, relative to the economy as a whole.

When history so clearly refutes your economic doctrine, the intelligent response is to reassess your thinking. A case in point is the Democrats. Even though their policies were pretty successful during the 1990s, particularly compared to the recent Bush record, in the last few years leading Democratic thinkers realized that they could do better still. Precisely because the economy is heading in the direction of inequality—and because, absent other forces, the poor and middle-class will struggle—Democrats today are putting more emphasis on aggressive efforts to protect average Americans, even if that means meddling with the economy in ways they thought unwise a decade ago.

But Republicans have reacted differently. Instead of taking the last few years as a cue that maybe it's time to offer something besides more Bush-style tax cuts, they decided that what the country really needs is . . . more Bush-style tax cuts! And McCain's agenda indicates that he agrees wholeheartedly. After extending Bush's tax reductions, which are set to expire in 2011, McCain would trim taxes on corporate income and estates. He's also proposed creating a new, parallel tax system into which any American could opt. While he's been a bit fuzzy on the details, it, too, would cut taxes disproportionately for wealthy Americans.

If all these proposals took effect, according to the independent and highly respected Tax Policy Center, 80 percent of the McCain tax cuts would go into the pockets of the richest quintile of Americans. They would see their after-tax incomes go up by an average of 6 percent. By contrast, somebody in the middle quintile would see his or her income rise by 1.4 percent while somebody in the poorest quintile would realize a yield of just 0.6 percent. To put these statistics in human terms, a multimillionaire—say, a wealthy landowner in Sedona, Arizona—would get enough money to buy a luxury car. (The top 1 percent of taxpayers would reap an average bonus of more than $100,000 per year under McCain's plan.) But a tool-and-die maker working for a Detroit auto supplier would get about $600, maybe enough to cover half a month's mortgage. Somebody in the lowest income quintile—say, a single waitress in rural Virginia—would, with her $65 windfall, get an extra trip or two to the grocery store.

But that's just half the story. Those tax cuts would cost money—a lot of money. McCain has, at times, invoked the thoroughly discredited supply-side argument that his tax cuts can help pay for themselves by generating more growth. Mostly, though, McCain has emphasized his intention to pay for the new tax cuts by slashing wasteful spending. And it's hard to overstate how laughable this is.

McCain may have a strong record of opposing pork-barrel spending, but there simply isn't enough pork in the budget to make up this kind of money. After consulting with budget experts, the Annenberg Public Policy Center's website factcheck.org concluded that McCain would have to cut discretionary spending—including things like secondary education and veteran's health benefits—by 20 percent just to realize the $100 billion savings he's claimed he could find. And that $100 billion wouldn't even come close to offsetting the enormous tax cuts—which, according to the Tax Policy Center, would cost the federal government around $700 billion per year.

So, if McCain is serious about paying for his tax cuts, he'd have to look elsewhere—to the three big entitlement programs: Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. McCain has frequently indicated an interest in doing just that, suggesting that, as president, he'd convene a bipartisan commission on entitlement reform. He's called the present financing of Social Security—which relies on contributions from present workers to pay for present retirees—a "disgrace," even though it's the way the program has always run. McCain has also long supported efforts to privatize Social Security, an initiative that would erode the basic income guarantee that Social Security provides and result in reduced benefits. It may not sound so drastic, given that some Social Security recipients are pretty well-off. But remember that, for about two-thirds of elderly Americans, Social Security represents approximately half of their incomes. Even modest benefit reductions would affect these retirees.

Of course, it's possible McCain wouldn't slash entitlements, perhaps because it'd be politically impossible. But, if he left entitlements intact, he'd simply be reprising Bush's feat—that is, he'd run up more debt. The Tax Policy Center estimates that, absent offsetting cuts, the McCain tax agenda would add more than $8.5 trillion in new debt over the next ten years—more than double what Obama would add. And this would hit

Blog Heaven.
Walk the Plank
TNR staff slices and dices Topic A
Get on the Stump
Michael Crowley and Noam Scheiber cover Campaign '08
Grow a Spine
Martin Peretz tours the world
The New TNR.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the poor and middle-class just as surely as spending cuts today would. Sometime in the future, the sky-high interest payments on that borrowed money (not to mention the depressed tax receipts from reduced growth) would force the government to choose between slashing entitlements for retirees or slashing spending that benefits everybody else. "He hastens the day of reckoning when government resources are too small to sustain current commitments," says Henry Aaron, a Brookings Institution economist. "The right analogy here is the kid who kills his parents and then asks for mercy as an orphan."

The other economic lesson of recent history concerns exposure to financial risk—specifically, the risk of high medical expenses. For the last 30 years or so, the proportion of Americans with health insurance has declined, primarily because insurance has gotten more expensive than either employers or individuals feel they can afford. Even people with insurance have felt the impact of these rising costs in the form of higher premiums, co-payments, and deductibles. But, rather than bolstering public insurance programs for the poor or creating a universal health care system—which is the solution Obama, like most Democrats, now favors—McCain has once again taken a cue from President Bush. His supposed solution to the health care crisis lies in a sweeping—and potentially destabilizing—change in the tax code.

Right now, the government exempts money spent on group health insurance premiums from personal income taxes. McCain would get rid of that exemption and replace it with a tax credit, worth $2,500 to individuals and $5,000 to families, to cover money spent on insurance and medical expenses. The credit would be refundable, which means that, if you were too poor to pay taxes, you'd get the money as a straight subsidy from the government. It's hard to know for sure exactly how the change would play out; among other things, McCain and his advisers have offered contradictory versions of whether they'd also cut the exemption for payroll taxes, too. But it's clear that at least some people who don't presently have health insurance would go out and buy some, thereby increasing their protection from medical expenses. For these reasons, it's easy to conclude—as some commentators have—that McCain's health care proposal is actually progress of a sort.

But what kind of insurance would people be getting? The existing tax break on group health insurance, which has been around since the 1940s, means that, for most workers, one dollar of health insurance from your employer is actually worth more than one dollar in salary. That's a major reason employees have pushed for group health coverage over the years—and employers have provided it. Take away the tax break, and the incentives will change. Fewer people will end up with group health insurance, since group coverage will, in effect, become more expensive.

That's fine if there's a good substitute for group insurance; Obama's universal coverage program, for example, would let anybody buy into a public insurance option or obtain private insurance through the system federal employees use. But McCain creates no such mechanism. As a result, people without group insurance would have to shop for coverage on their own, in the individual market, where it's difficult to find the same sort of protection. Individual coverage is generally available only to those in relatively good health, since when insurers sell policies one-by-one they can, and do, avoid people with pre-existing medical conditions. And the benefits are rarely as comprehensive, mostly because large companies have better bargaining leverage (to buy more protection for the same money) and because offering skimpy benefits for serious illness is yet another way insurers can avoid enrolling too many sick people.

Another seemingly small tweak in McCain's health plans would most likely make this problem even worse. McCain has said he would allow people to purchase coverage across state lines, something they cannot do now. This would reduce the cost of insurance, McCain says, since many states have enacted regulations that drive up the cost of medical care. What McCain doesn't mention is that these regulations are in place to make sure insurers provide certain benefits, price their offerings within certain limits, or abide by certain standards of solvency. Not all of these regulations are sensible—some are the result of lobbying by medical professionals or disease groups—but many of them are. They can require insurers to cover cancer screenings, diabetes care, or mental health treatments, for example. If people could purchase coverage across state lines, most likely the entire insurance industry would relocate to the state with the most lax regulations—and existing regulations in other states would become effectively meaningless—much as the credit card industry relocated to Delaware and South Dakota in the 1970s and '80s. And, again, people would end up with weaker health insurance.

The ultimate question about McCain's agenda, then, is not whether it's deeply conservative but whether he'd really pursue it. He has reportedly admitted he "doesn't really understand economics" and has never shown the kind of passion for it that he has, say, for national security issues. And, while McCain has at times surrounded himself with the likes of Goodman and Gramm, he also has more sensible voices in his orbit. Most notable among them is chief economic adviser Douglas Holtz-Eakin, who gained a (well-deserved) reputation for integrity as head of the Congressional Budget Office by refusing to countenance fiscally irresponsible arguments—even when they came from fellow Republicans. Maybe this is a sign that, if elected, McCain would stop listening to the ideological zealots on economic policy—and start listening to saner, more moderate voices.

It's a comforting theory, but not, ultimately, a convincing one. Whether it's ambivalence, ignorance, expediency, or conviction that has propelled McCain to the right, there's no reason to think his behavior will change after Election Day. Remember, we've seen this all before. In 2000, Bush ran on a deeply conservative agenda of slashing taxes, gutting Social Security, and peeling back health insurance coverage even for middle class Americans. But, despite valiant efforts from writers like Paul Krugman to point this out, both the press and the public fell for the myth that Bush was a "compassionate conservative." And, while McCain will have to confront a more ornery Democratic Congress than Bush did in his first term, McCain's margin for error will also be a lot smaller. Bush was fortunate in that he took office after the Clinton boom, when the federal treasury was relatively flush and a long expansion had fattened people's pocketbooks. Now, the budget is back in the red, and the public is desperate for financial assistance and security. Dismissing McCain's declared agenda as empty rhetoric would be a huge gamble—one this country can ill afford. ◆

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Man, A Plan, Afghanistan

If Obama really wants to smite Al Qaeda, this is what he should do.

PETER BERGEN

In late May, some 40 Pakistani journalists received a summons to an unusual press conference given by Baitullah Mehsud, the rarely photographed leader of the Pakistani Taliban, who is accused of orchestrating the 2007 assassination of Benazir Bhutto, of sending suicide bombers to Spain earlier this year, and of dispatching an army of fighters into Afghanistan to attack U.S. and NATO forces in recent months. Surrounded by a posse of heavily armed Taliban guards, Mehsud boasted that he had hundreds of trained suicide bombers ready for martyrdom.

It was an extraordinarily brazen public performance for a man who is supposedly on the run. The conference wasn't in a Pakistani jail or a U.S. detention center, but in a school in South Waziristan, on Pakistan's northwestern border with Afghanistan. And the meeting wasn't secret: According to two of the journalists who attended, reporters were given 24 hours' notice and were able to call in news from the press conference on their satellite phones.

Don't be surprised. The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan achieved wonders—but only in the short term. Today, Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders are running free. Pakistan seems unable or unwilling to clamp down on leading militants on its territory, and jihadist attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan have increased enormously in the past year. More Pakistani citizens died in militant violence in 2007 than in the previous five years combined. Similarly, in Afghanistan's eastern provinces, violence is up by 40 percent in the last several months; more American soldiers are now dying in Afghanistan than in Iraq. And, as is by now well-known, U.S. intelligence assesses that Al Qaeda has regrouped along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

The deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan has grabbed the attention of American politicians across the spectrum. John McCain and Barack Obama have both recently called for thousands more American soldiers to go to Afghanistan. But simply throwing more soldiers at the problem will do little if the next White House doesn't pursue the kind of strategic reset that helped the U.S. military to dampen down the violence in Iraq.

The solution is twofold. First, recognizing the peril that the descent of Afghanistan into a failed state would cause, the United States needs to seriously reconsider its stopgap policies there. It must overhaul its approach to the insurgency by building up the size of the Afghan army and police, and by embedding the best American advisers in their ranks. It must fix the problems in the NATO mission, decouple the Taliban from the drug trade, embark on effective reconstruction, end coalition air strikes that kill civilians, and block the Taliban's freedom of movement throughout much of the country.

Baitullah Mehsud (center) speaks to the press at his stronghold in the tribal district of South Waziristan near the Afghan border. "[J]ihad in Afghanistan will continue," he said.

AFP PHOTO/IJAZ MEHMOOD/NEWSCOM

Controlling the Taliban, though, is not only an Afghan problem, and it is tied directly to the second part of the solution: Pakistan. As much as the Pakistanis suffer from Islamist insurgents, the country's powerful military intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), also tolerates the Taliban as a sort of backup plan to assert control if the United States suddenly decides to cut and run from Afghanistan. To defeat the Taliban and Al Qaeda, the United States must start dealing with Afghanistan and Pakistan as one region, not as separate entities.

For American interventionists, Afghanistan was supposed to be the model: a quick war and a thorough renovation of the country, its infrastructure, and its political system. Instead, the country is in danger of becoming a bigger mess than Iraq and commands only a fraction of the budget and attention. Unless that changes, the model victory will turn into a model disaster.

In 2002, the Taliban were not much more than a nuisance; today, they are much more than that. They have been encircling Kabul with an eye to cutting it off. They have been ambushing convoys of supplies on their way to the capital and holding territory in the neighboring Wardak province. Last month, they killed ten French soldiers in Sarobi, 30 miles from Kabul. These operations are beginning to convince the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

population that international forces are losing control.

As a result, the enthusiastic support Afghans have given for the U.S. invasion is now eroding. An ABC News/BBC poll released in December 2006 found that "big majorities continue to call the U.S.-led invasion a good thing for their country (88 percent)," while polling last year showed that number dropping to 76 percent; meanwhile, support for U.S. efforts declined from 57 percent to 42 percent between 2006 and 2007. This increasing disenchantment does not represent buy-in for the Taliban, but rather disillusionment about the deepening security problems and the lack of tangible reconstruction in many parts of Afghanistan.

To roll back the Taliban, which must be the first step in stabilizing Afghanistan, more soldiers are needed. In this, both American presidential candidates are correct. But their public statements don't acknowledge the scope of what is needed: Classic counterinsurgency doctrine suggests that Afghanistan needs something like half a million additional soldiers and policemen to secure its population.

Iraq has around 550,000 members of the Iraqi security services and some 140,000 American soldiers stationed there, while Afghanistan—which is one-third larger and has four million more citizens—has only 140,000 soldiers and police and around 70,000 US and NATO troops. You can't bring security to the country with those low numbers. And, without security, you can't have reconstruction.

Still, Afghanistan does not need a lot more American boots on the ground. It needs the right *kind* of boots. Because the U.S. military and NATO are now stretched to breaking point, the vast majority of additional soldiers and policemen must be supplied by the Afghans. To that end, the coalition must send more Special Forces and civilian advisers who specialize in the training of indigenous forces.

Which raises a question that is now weighing heavily on the minds of senior U.S. military officials: Could the security shortfall in Afghanistan be reversed by replicating the "Sons of Iraq" program, which helped dampen down the Iraqi civil war by putting on the U.S. payroll 100,000 Sunni militants who subsequently helped to decimate Al Qaeda in Iraq? Yes and no. The Sons of Iraq signed up not only for a U.S. paycheck but also because Al Qaeda in Iraq had turned its guns against fellow Sunnis who did not precisely share its ultra-fundamentalist views. The Taliban have not engendered anything like the intense anger among Afghans that the foreign-led militants of Al Qaeda did among the Sunnis of Iraq.

However, according to a senior Afghan official, President Hamid Karzai's cabinet is seriously considering the idea of establishing tribal militias of 50 to 300 men to establish security at the district level and to provide some counterweight to local militants. The idea is potentially a good one: Ordinary Afghans tend to trust their tribal *shuras* to solve their problems, and these "Sons of Afghanistan" would fill the security void until the Afghan army and police reached levels at which they could secure their country—many, many years from now. Such tribal militias could be paid with U.S. funds just as the Sons of Iraq are. Such a plan, though, must be implemented carefully, to avoid recreating the warlord-led militias that have been so successfully disbanded since the fall of the Taliban.

Another promising alternative would be for the United States to provide logistical and financial support for the Afghan government to institute a draft for males older than 18. These draftees would serve for two years and would help to stand up an Afghan National Guard, which in turn would help bring security and foster a sense of Afghan nationhood.

But just as important as building up the Afghan army and police force is combating the insurgency by reducing its size. In the post-Taliban Bonn conference that set the stage for the present Afghan government, there were no mechanisms to include the Taliban. This is no longer a viable position. Already an effective amnesty program has disarmed hundreds of Taliban soldiers; the time has now come to reach out quietly to more senior members of the Taliban who are open to negotiating a lasting peace.

In all this, the United States must take the lead. Over the past three years, since NATO took over responsibility for military operations in the north, west, and south of the country, violence has grown exponentially. It's still politically and financially useful for the operation to be a genuine multi-country coalition, but the time has come for the United States to admit that the military operations, particularly in the unsettled south, must be taken over by Americans with help from those allied Special Forces who are up to the job. Even the most able NATO allies don't have the capability of American forces, while other NATO allies come to the table so freighted with "national caveats" about what they can and can't do that they are largely useless in battle. Those NATO forces should be deployed in more settled parts of the country for the peacekeeping operations that they signed up for in the first place.

Of course, the rising violence is fed by non-military conditions on the ground, not least the widespread feeling among Afghans that they haven't seen much for the billions of dollars of reconstruction aid that supposedly has been lavished on the country. Much of that money has been consumed by the various international organizations whose four-wheel drives clog the streets of Kabul. In March, the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief released findings that some 40 percent of aid to Afghanistan is funneled back to donor countries.

To reverse the justifiable resentment Afghans feel about this, the United States should focus on completing some high-profile projects with real benefits to the Afghan people. Three projects come to mind. The first is to turn on the lights in Kabul, which receives on average only a few hours of electricity a day. The second is to secure the Kandahar-to-Kabul road, the most important in the country, which was opened as a black-top freeway with much hoopla in 2003 but which would now be a suicidal route for anyone driving it without a security detail. Third, finishing the Kajaki dam in southern Afghanistan should become a top priority; when completed, it will provide electricity to some two million Afghans, most of whom live deep in Talibanland.

Also currently feeding the Taliban's ranks is America's boneheaded counternarcotics strategy. America's primary policy prescription is poppy field eradication, and a more failed policy is hard to imagine: Afghanistan continues to produce ever-larger amounts of opium and its derivative, heroin—providing 93 percent of the world's supply—and the Taliban insurgency is financed in good part by this trade. What's more, two million Afghan farmers and their families survive on poppies, and those whose crops are destroyed are generally the poorer ones who can't pay the bribes to have their fields left alone. No surprise that those farmers are easy recruits to the Taliban cause.

Instead of penalizing these poor farmers, the United States needs to invest

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the legitimate Afghan agricultural economy—though subsidies, price supports, and seeds for alternative crops—and to build roads to get those crops to market. As it did with Colombia's drug kingpins in the 1990s, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration should make use of Afghanistan's shame-based culture and make public the list of the country's top drug suspects, including government officials.

Finally, if the United States wants to stop adding fuel to the Taliban fire, it must stop killing civilians. Because Afghanistan is an economy of force operation, U.S. military operations call for air strikes far more often than is the case in Iraq, with predictable consequences. In an ABC News/BBC poll of Afghans in 2007, 34 percent said civilians had been killed or seriously injured by coalition forces in their area. Of the some 700 civilians killed in the first six months of 2008, around one-third were killed by Afghan, American or NATO soldiers, according to U.N. figures. That is an improvement over the same time period in 2007, when coalition forces killed more civilians than the Taliban, but the numbers must continue to come down.

ALL THESE EFFORTS will fail, however, if America doesn't recognize another threat to its Afghan policy: Pakistan, which is offering crucial safe haven to the Taliban even as it professes its cooperation with the United States. A careful study by the United Nations released last September found that suicide attackers in Afghanistan "draw heavily from [religious schools] across the border in Pakistan." And a survey of 90 insurgencies since 1945, done by Seth Jones, a political scientist at RAND, found that "insurgents have been successful forty-three percent of the time when they enjoyed a sanctuary."

How the Pakistan sanctuary fuels the violence in Afghanistan can be seen in the case of Rahmad Khan, a cow herder in Pakistan's tribal area, whom I met in a Kabul jail in July. Khan told me he was about 30, that he couldn't read or write, and that he was recruited three months earlier to be a "martyr" in Afghanistan in the jihad against the foreign occupiers. He told me he made about eight dollars per month herding cows—not enough to get married—and agreed to do a suicide operation because "in Paradise, I would find *houris* (virgins) for free." He was taken to a madrassa where militants were manufacturing suicide vests and then over the border to Afghanistan. But the vision of the virgins disappeared in a flash after Afghan policemen in May thought he seemed nervous, arrested him, and found he was wearing a suicide vest.

Unfortunately, there are hundreds more Rahmad Khans standing by. In 2007, more than 50 suicide attacks took place in Pakistan and some 140 in Afghanistan, many of them undertaken by the Taliban. Right now, the Pakistanis are holding on to their radical groups as an insurance policy for asserting de facto control over Afghanistan should the Americans withdraw. The new president should make it clear this country will stay in Afghanistan for decades to come as only a long-term U.S. commitment will convince the Pakistanis to end their tolerance for the militant groups headquartered on their western border.

There are some promising signs that the Pakistani establishment is waking up to its domestic militant threat. In July, the new prime minister of Pakistan, Yousaf Raza Gillani, told a press conference, "Pakistan is not fighting the war of any other country. The war on terror is in our own interest." But, even if the Pakistani government turns on *all* of its militants, there is no obvious quick way to end their safe havens in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), areas that for centuries have not been fully under any government's control, that have female literacy rates of only 3 percent, and that are largely controlled by the Taliban. The Pakistanis tried the hammer approach there in 2003 and 2004 with a number of military operations, but they were badly defeated. That approach was followed by appeasement in the form of "peace" agreements—nothing more than admissions of military failure—that led to greater militant control in the FATA. The most recent approach is a mix of peace agreements, military operations and reconstruction, which on paper is not a bad idea, but, even under the most optimistic scenarios, it will take many years to pacify the region.

The United States has earmarked $750 million for development in the FATA and $400 million to bolster the Frontier Corps, the local paramilitary force, which is a good start, but it may be premature: The FATA is in the grip of a violent insurgency, and even the less violent agencies, such as Khyber, are unsafe. Reconstruction in such a context may simply not be possible. To help tamp down that insurgency, America should assist the Pakistanis in building up their counterinsurgency (COIN) capabilities. The Pakistani army is built for a land war with India, not fighting terrorists and insurgents. Pakistani officers should be encouraged to attend COIN courses at American war colleges and the United States should support courses in counterinsurgency at Pakistan's National Defense University. None of this would cost a lot of U.S. dollars and would yield potentially large results, as the new U.S. counterinsurgency strategy has done in Iraq.

Another area where small amounts of U.S. aid could yield large results is helping to support deradicalization programs for jailed Pakistani militants. Such programs have had some success in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Singapore but have not been tried in Pakistan.

In the larger regional picture, the United States must also put serious diplomatic effort into settling the Kashmir dispute, something the Indians and Pakistanis have been moving forward on for the past several years with scant American support. Kashmir is a core grievance for many Pakistani Muslims and is also a training ground for jihadist terrorists, some of whom end up working with Al Qaeda. Some kind of equitable Kashmir settlement would curtail this violent training and help to end the support that elements of the Pakistani establishment give to Kashmiri jihadi groups allied with Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

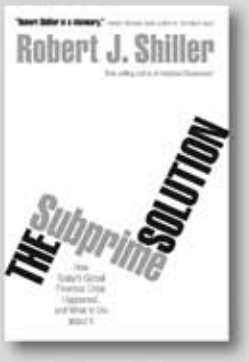
Finally, as part of a regional grand bargain aimed at satisfying Pakistan, the United States should encourage Afghanistan to recognize formally the Durand Line of 1893 that demarcated Afghanistan's border with the British Raj and is the de facto border with Pakistan today. Afghanistan does not recognize the Durand Line and so technically claims territory deep inside Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. For Afghan leaders to continually complain about Pakistani incursions over a border they don't even acknowledge makes no sense.

As the new president assumes office in January, some will no doubt advise him that increased American engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan of the sort outlined above will be costly and dangerous. His best response is that, on September 11, we learned that neglect of Afghanistan and Pakistan costs even more. ◆

Peter Bergen is a senior fellow at the New America Foundation and the author of THE OSAMA BIN LADEN I KNOW.

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Subprime Solution

How Today's Global Financial Crisis Happened, and What to Do about It

Robert J. Shiller

"Shiller's diagnosis of the subprime mortgage mess is biting in its intensity—the best I have seen—and encompasses the human tragedy as well as the economic and financial crisis."
—Peter L. Bernstein,
author of *Capital Ideas*

Cloth $16.95 978-0-691-13929-6

Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State

Why Americans Vote the Way They Do

Andrew Gelman

"This book will help people on all sides to see politics more clearly, and it will require all of us to toss many pieces of conventional wisdom into the dustbin."
—E. J. Dionne Jr.,
author of *Why Americans Hate Politics*

Cloth $27.95 978-0-691-13927-2

Richard Nixon

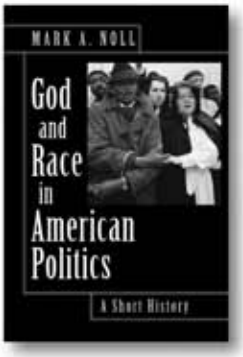
Speeches, Writings, Documents

Edited and introduced by Rick Perlstein

"This selection of Nixon documents is excellent, as is Rick Perlstein's introduction. It gets Nixon right, and it identifies the defining themes of his life and career."—David Greenberg, Rutgers University, author of *Nixon's Shadow*

The James Madison Library in American Politics
Sean Wilentz, General Editor

Paper $18.95 978-0-691-13699-8



God and Race in American Politics

A Short History

Mark A. Noll

"A magisterial account of the interplay of race and religion in America from slavery to today. The account is balanced, neither an indictment nor an apologia."—Peter L. Berger, author of *The Sacred Canopy*

Cloth $22.95 978-0-691-12536-7

The Price of Everything

A Parable of Possibility and Prosperity

Russell Roberts

"A remarkable use of parables and dialogues to convey economic intuitions. This should be mandatory reading for anyone who wants to understand this branch of applied philosophy we call economics."—Nassim Nicholas Taleb, author of *The Black Swan*

Cloth $24.95 978-0-691-13509-0

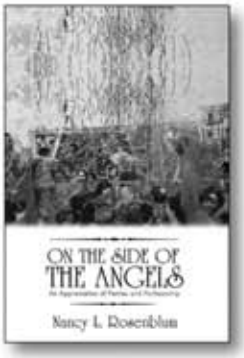
Cop in the Hood

My Year Policing Baltimore's Eastern District

Peter Moskos

"A thoughtful, measured critique—of the failed drug war, its discontents, and the self-defeating criminal-justice system looming just behind."
—*The Atlantic*

Cloth $24.95 978-0-691-14008-7



On the Side of the Angels

An Appreciation of Parties and Partisanship

Nancy L. Rosenblum

"Nancy Rosenblum's exciting, original book poses an energetic challenge to both political theory and to citizens disaffected by democracy today."
—Richard H. Pildes, New York University School of Law

Cloth $29.95 978-0-691-13534-2 October

Public Freedom

Dana Villa

"*Public Freedom* is full of subtle, important, and in some cases controversial readings of major thinkers and represents a significant move forward in Villa's own thinking . . . . An impressive and successful piece of work."—Patchen Markell, University of Chicago

Paper $24.95 978-0-691-13594-6 October
Cloth $75.00 978-0-691-13593-9

GREAT DISCOUNTS. VISIT OUR BOOK SALE AT PRESS.PRINCETON.EDU/BOOKSALE

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

800.777.4726
press.princeton.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

SETTINGS

Place, the place where a story is set, can figure powerfully in our encounter with a film—perhaps even more in our memory of it. Think of what Manhattan did for some of Sidney Lumet's films, or Arizona for some of John Ford's, or that Swedish island for some of Ingmar Bergman's. Surely the overwhelming example is what the desert did for David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*.

The Pool by Chris Smith raises the subject again, in an unusual way. Smith is an American who has made several features and who, a few years ago, worked with friends on a film in India. The experience kindled a hope to make a picture of his own there one day: thus, reversing matters, he chose his setting before he found his film. At last it came, and he went back—to the city that had especially taken him, Panjim in Goa.

Goa, on the west coast, is the smallest Indian state and has a unique history. Most of India, during the imperial era, was of course British, but for four and a half centuries Goa was a Portuguese colony. In 1961 the presence of a foreign entity in an otherwise liberated India was ended by an Indian takeover. For Smith, the combination of Portuguese vestiges with Goa today was a magnet. He had read a story by Randy Russell—set in America!—which seemed to him apt for transfer, so with Russell he wrote the screenplay, relocating it to Goa, then directed it and did the cinematography himself. The film unfolds small surprises as it goes; but the directing and camera work are fine from the start.

The center of the story is Venkatesh, an eighteen-year-old handyman-porter in a small hotel in Panjim who picks up extra cash from sidewalk peddling. His close pal is an eleven-year-old named Jhangir who comes from the same small town as Venkatesh; he works in a restaurant and helps out with his friend's peddling. Not far away is a luxe district where there is an estate with a large house and a large swimming pool. The place is empty. Whenever he can, Venkatesh climbs a mango tree outside the estate and gazes at the pool. He fantasizes about swimming in it, about living there, and is teased about his dreaming by Jhangir; still, he clings to his vision of a life not merely richer but somehow superior.

ANTHONY RUSSO

THE POOL
Vitagraph Films

AUGUST EVENING
Maya Releasing

One day when he climbs the tree, he sees a mature man—obviously not a laborer—doing some gardening and a young girl reading by the pool. The man is the owner, Venkatesh rightly infers, who must be wealthy, because he doesn't actually live here: it's a spare residence. One day the youth follows the girl to a park and almost embarrassedly speaks to her. She, fairly cordial, is Ayesha, daughter of the older man, Nana. Soon Venkatesh also manages to approach Nana in a plant nursery and, by offering to help him, ingratiates himself. In a short while he is working for Nana part-time and becomes intimate enough to ask the older man why he keeps this estate though he lives in Bombay. Nana tells him that he won't sell the place because his son was drowned in the pool.

We might expect that the story has been built so that this lower-class youth can take the place of Nana's drowned son. (And, just possibly, there could be a future with Ayesha.) But Smith refuses the pattern. Venkatesh is not a movie hero. He is gaunt, graceless, illiterate. In time, he even tells of a semi-crazed six months in his past. Smith characterizes him as more or less the opposite of a gleaming social aspirant.

Nana, too, behaves in a counter-movie way. He is not, as we might expect, put off by the younger man's person or condition, and apparently he doesn't believe the craziness story. (Indeed, it may be only the youth's attempt to make himself interesting.) He urges Venkatesh to get an education and eventually offers him a gardening job with him in Bombay where he can also go to school.

Meanwhile, the youth and his younger pal have been hanging out with Ayesha. Like the heroine of a novel she is reading, she is a "messed-up" girl, affectless, somewhat inert—a condition not available to people of Venkatesh's class. When the three of them visit an old Portuguese fortress, the disparities between the two working-class kids and the upper-class girl seem heightened.

Venkatesh's decision about Nana's offer is delayed by a return to his hometown to see his mother and sisters. (In the family's attitude toward him, there is no hint that he is a recovered mental invalid.) When he returns to Panjim, he makes his decision about the job offer. Then he makes another decision. The end, involving Jhangir, brings still another decision.

Venkatesh is played by Venkatesh Chavan, Jhangir by Jhangir Badshah. Both are new actors who have been ingeniously directed by Smith. (Consider two facts: the dialogue is in Hindi, in which Smith is not fluent, and Hindi is not the young actors' native language. Out of this linguistic tangle come two seamless

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

performances.) Smith obviously had an easier time with Nana Patekar, who is an eminence in Indian film and who has a commanding ease. Through Smith's cast and around them, his extensive talents shine.

So we have a film that is a kind of counter-film, which sets expectations in an environment that supports unexpected results. This is not to say that the streets and shops and parks and historical relics in Panjim shape the story: but the place and the society seem especially right for a story shorn of cinematic upholstery. It will be difficult to remember this film without remembering Goa. *The Pool* maintains that it is possible, even for a commonplace youth, to have a vision and to have the outcome leave him in some ways stronger. Yes, something like it could have happened in Brooklyn or Boise: but Goa is where, Smith persuades us, it had to happen.

August Evening is otherwise placed. Physically, the setting is Texas—generally a verdant Texas, not longhorn country. The subject is a family of Mexicans: a mature father and mother, and grown children. (Most of the dialogue is in Spanish.) Intrinsically, however, the picture does more than deal with the family: it is set in the family, as *The Pool* was set in Goa. Though the picture travels around, it seems to take place in a special country: all the family members seem to have almost fierce citizenship in a country of their own. (That country has oddities and contradictions, as do all countries.)

Jaime, the patriarch, is about sixty. He works on a chicken farm. With him and his wife, Maria, lives Lupe, their widowed daughter-in-law. Maria dies early in the story: Jaime and Lupe, dear to each other, continue to live together. Jaime's job fizzles, and this odd pair—the graying man and his son's widow—have to move along as he looks for a job. Sometimes they live with one or another of Jaime's two other children, and there are family—"territorial"—frictions. Though these burn out, Jaime and Lupe move on, but are never out of touch with his children. He has trouble finding work. Sometimes he is reduced to hanging out on a street corner with other men looking for a day's job. Lupe does some work in restaurants and teaches guitar to children.

Jaime, as he has done from the start, urges Lupe to remarry. She demurs. She simply is not keen on the idea of a new marriage, no matter how earnestly Jaime and others in the family encourage her. She feels safe in several ways with Jaime: also, he is close in her mind to her lost husband. At last a young butcher, Luis (a touch too evidently Mr. Right), comes along. He falls in love with Lupe, and matters progress—eventually—for Lupe and Luis and Jaime.

The details of the story are less engaging than the texture of the picture. Chris Eska, the debutant director, is clearly familiar with the film world's past. Like Mizoguchi and Antonioni, among many others, he enlists the environment of his film in his drama. For Eska, this is not a revel in landscape; although the cinematography by Yasu Tanida is gorgeous, it is a belief in physicality. Instances: the very last shots in the picture are of a kitchen, a light bulb, a roof. The imprint of these banal components of the day seems to suggest a commitment to the burden and privilege of existence, of just getting along in the world as it is. In an oblique way, this view helps the true setting of the picture—family ties and tugs. The characters as individuals and as members of the family, in all their flares of feeling, are constantly entailed with dailiness.

Two themes dominate. First, the Jaime-Lupe relationship, which is lovely, a father-daughter linkage that was created by them, not ordained in blood. Second, a family's need to deal with an aging parent, a common question couched here in affection and quandary. (Hence the title.) Both themes flow along, though the pace of the film is patient. We are held because, for two hours, we become members. With the same kitchens and light bulbs, we join this small nation.

Eska, who wrote and edited his film, appears to be at the beginning of a good career. (Note: he is the second extraordinary young American director to appear in a month, after Courtney Hunt of *Frozen River*.) He gets a touching performance from Veronica Loren as Lupe. But, as Smith did with the youngsters in *The Pool*, Eska assists a semi-mysterious marvel. Pedro Castaneda, who plays Jaime, is not an actor, yet he is sturdy, true, screen-filling. This paradox of a non-actor's acting, familiar since the neo-realist days in Italy—the leading man of De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* was not an actor—occurs when an acute director sees in a non-actor some qualities that he can help the camera to find. Notably, this phenomenon is one of the ways in which film has touched ideas about the very making of art. ◆

Jed Perl on Art

PHILOSOPHICAL FURNISHINGS

Thomas Hope and Jean-Michel Frank, commanding figures in the decorative arts, exude a mysterious and lingering power. The rooms that they so lovingly arranged—Hope's in a bold neoclassical style, Frank's in an austere modern manner—have pretty much disappeared. And the furniture designs to which they gave an almost philosophical fervor, whether Hope's Grecian chairs or Frank's cubistic couches, cannot themselves explain the reputations that these men still enjoy. The power of their work lies deeper—in the belief that the way a chair or a room or a home is designed reflects a person's psychological and maybe even spiritual condition. This belief was relatively new when Hope died in 1831, and would be nearly a cliché by the time of Frank's death in 1941. Hope and Frank were showmen and theoreticians, materialists and idealists, and they brought to the history of taste a largeness of ambition more naturally associated with the history of ideas.

THOMAS HOPE

JEAN-MICHEL FRANK

Thinking about the life and the work of these figures is no easy task. If you linger too long over the details of their various projects, you can make them look like fussbudgets. And if you insist too much on the historical importance of their work, you risk sounding like a pinhead. What is so impressive about the writing that has been done on Hope and Frank in recent years is that it is neither parochial nor pretentious. David Watkin, who together with Philip Hewat-Jaboor organized the major exhibition that is at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts through mid-November, has devoted much of his life to Hope, beginning with a fine book, *Thomas Hope and the Neo-Classical Idea*, published in 1968. The catalogue of the Bard show—which was seen in a larger version at the Victoria and Albert in London last spring—is the culmination of four decades of thinking about Hope. Pierre-Emmanuel Martin-Vivier's brilliant new book on Jean-Michel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frank began as a thesis at the Sorbonne. It has a rather overelaborate title: *Jean-Michel Frank: The Strange and Subtle Luxury of the Parisian Haute-Monde in the Art Deco Period*; but anybody who has become inured to the slapdash collage of anecdotes that passes for social and cultural history in volumes about the decorative arts will be happily surprised by Martin-Vivier's study, which is solid, resonant, persuasive.

In the preface to his earlier book, Watkin commented that Hope was of a generation of neoclassicists who "were forever saying what they were going to do, how and why they were going to do it, and how much better everyone would feel once it had been done." And although Jean-Michel Frank was not one to put his ideas in print, there is about both men an evangelical quality. They sought nothing less than to reform the way people lived. Although it was the upper classes and the educated classes that were most immediately affected by their work, their ideas did eventually have a more general cultural resonance. Figures such as Hope and Frank helped to shape the fascination with interior spaces that has by now spawned generations of design firms, shelter magazines, and lifestyle supplements. Their achievements span a century and more when there was a rising interest, among artists and writers and thinkers of all kinds, in the character and the quality of interior spaces. Their work reminds us that behind the obsession with product placement and merchandising that fuels the home furnishing and decorating market of our day, there is (or there should be) a fundamental hunger to shape the way one lives, to infuse the design of a room with meanings, with metaphors.

It was in 1840, nine years after Hope's death, that Poe published his famous essay "The Philosophy of Furniture." His critique of the pomposity of American taste—a critique, really, of Victorian merchandising—concludes with a rhapsodic account of the kind of room in which a civilized person ought to live. Poe describes a poetic figure dozing in an interior that is elegantly and somewhat austerely appointed, with simple curtains, good paintings, a few fine pieces of furniture, and lots of beautifully bound books. When Baudelaire translated Poe's essay into French in 1852, he introduced it by musing, "Who among us, in his idle hours, has not taken a delicious pleasure in constructing for himself a model apartment, a dream house, a house of dreams?" Hope and Frank were always trying to construct that house of dreams—an interior that joined immediate necessities with historical memories, a space where the heterogeneity of experience was crystallized, sharpened, refined.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a growing tendency to see people's surroundings as reflecting their desires and principles and dreams. In the novels of Dickens and Balzac, the description of an interior often plays a critical role in the realization of a person's mental or psychological constitution. When Dickens wanted to telegraph his distaste for the social-climbing family in *Our Mutual Friend*, he named them the Veneerings, because their pretensions were as thin as the sheets of fine wood that can be glued onto some cheaper material. Later in the century, the sense that a home was a reflection of a personality would be developed in ever more self-conscious ways. Edmond de Goncourt wrote *La Maison d'un artiste*, a book-length tour through his home and his collections. Perhaps the most memorable passages in Huysmans's *À Rebours* are the naturalistic descriptions of Des Esseintes's elaborately decadent rooms. And then there is Henry James's *The Spoils of Poynton*, a novel with a plot that centers on the exquisite collections gathered in an elegant house that burns to the ground in the novel's final pages, so that James can give an ironic farewell to nineteenth-century connoisseurship,

We help the best moments in life come together.
Every CITGO station is locally owned and independently operated. And together we can ensure an ample supply of fuel to help you pursue your dreams. This dependable source of energy for our neighborhoods and communities enables families to create lifelong memories. And it's just one more way the people of CITGO are there for you at every turn.
THERE AT EVERY TURN.
CITGO

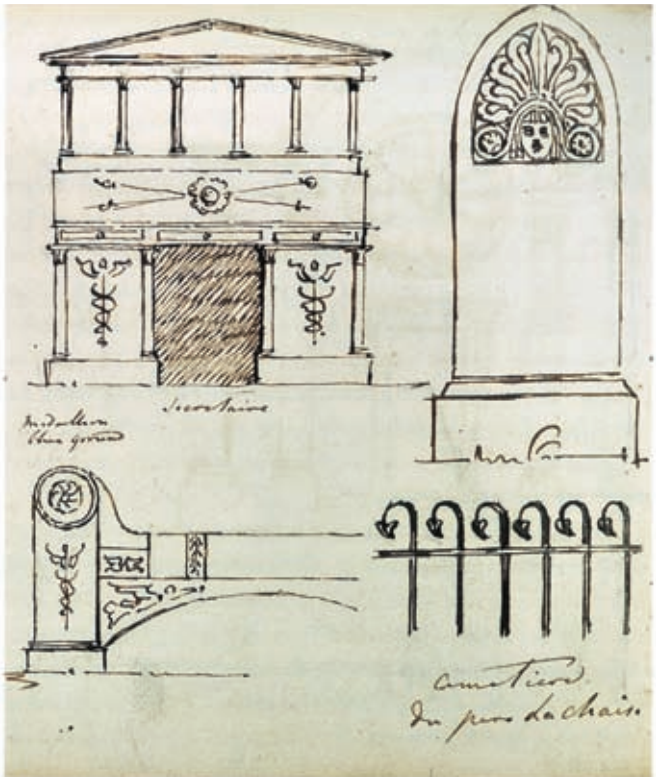
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which he regards as an especially seductive form of materialism.

Among nineteenth-century art critics, there was a fascination with painters such as Vermeer, de Hooch, and the Le Nain brothers, whose interest in the details of everyday life prefigured contemporary realism, with its emphasis on social and psychological dynamics. The studies of models in the studio that Corot painted in the 1850s, and a great many of the figures of Degas, Vuillard, Sickert, and Bonnard, are as much portraits of interiors as they are portraits of people. With Sickert, Vuillard, and Bonnard, the interior is often regarded as a new kind of physiognomy, with curtains and carpets and chairs observed as closely as the wrinkles on a forehead or the color of a person's eyes. Similar arguments can be made about certain earlier works, notably the interest in quotidian experience in Renaissance paintings of the Virgin at home or of Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine in their studies. And one can even look further back, remembering that many of Thomas Hope's ideas about Greek furniture, of which almost nothing survives, were derived from representations of interiors on ancient vases. But the long history of symbolic interiors notwithstanding, the representation of rooms certainly became more psychologically fraught as time went on. Renaissance and Baroque interiors tend to function allegorically, while in the modern era interiors are almost invariably infused with a private mental weather.

Hope and Frank wanted their interiors to have an intensely personal poetic power. And both men, having created these spaces, proceeded to document them—to become the chroniclers of their own creations. Hope's most famous book, *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*, was devoted in large measure to providing a room-by-room and sometimes object-by-object description, in words and pictures, of his London home. And Frank took considerable pains to ensure that the interiors he designed for private clients were preserved in beautiful photographs. These elegant black-and-white images, of which Martin-Vivier provides a generous selection in his book, are an invaluable record of high-bohemian Paris in the 1920s and 1930s.

For Hope and Frank, who were both born into extremely wealthy families but had an ambiguous relationship with the aristocratic world, the interiors they created became their own self-proclaimed aristocracy of taste. In the eighteenth century, Hope's family ran the most important merchant bank in Europe, and from their offices in Holland they funded governments and shaped the course of world events. Frank was the child of a wealthy German-Jewish financier who had lived in France since the 1880s. For both of them, taste was a matter of choice: the choice of how to live. And having made their own choices, they wanted to impart them to others. They became philosophers of furnishings—and they sought to put their philosophies into action.



Thomas Hope, sketches of *sécretaire,* detail of sofa, and architectural details, circa 1812

COURTESY YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Thomas Hope, who did so much to shape neoclassical taste in England, was born in Holland in 1769, and spent the last years of the eighteenth century on the grandest of grand tours, visiting Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Sicily, in addition to the more familiar sights of mainland Italy. Hope's interests were extraordinarily varied. The family had long been distinguished art collectors, and to their holdings in European paintings Hope added a very important collection of Greek and Roman vases and significant groups of Egyptian and Greek and Roman antiquities, as well as works by contemporary neoclassicists, including Thorvaldsen, Canova, and Benjamin West. Hope was the author of a romantic novel called *Anastasius*, which Byron admired. He wrote about the history of architecture and published a set of plates that encouraged a classical style in women's fashion, popularized by his wife Louisa, a charismatic figure on the London social scene.

Like many masters of the decorative arts, Hope was an impresario rather than an artist—or perhaps it would be more to the point to say that for him images were ideas. David Watkin moves easily through the complexities of Hope's career, bringing to his appreciations of this idiosyncratic protagonist an encyclopedic understanding of the social and intellectual background. Neoclassicism was already several decades old by the time Hope was active in England in the first years of the nineteenth century. True, he was among the first to argue in England for an austere Greek classicism, for the overthrow of the more elaborately articulated Roman and Renaissance forms already popular; but Hope himself had a taste for the odd and the exotic, and this made him at times a most ambiguous prophet of austerity. The Bard catalogue, with contributions by nearly a dozen scholars, leaves one with a strong sense of Hope's almost kaleidoscopic avidities. If the Klismos chair, one of his favorite forms, takes us back to images we know from Greek vases, the influences on Hope's furniture were Egyptian as well as Greek and Roman, and the lushly perfumed and densely textured atmosphere of his London home suggested a fascination with Middle Eastern exoticism, a strong dose of Orientalism, which was also reflected in his fondness for Ottoman dress.

The reach of Hope's imagination is certainly impressive, though I don't know whether to call this a healthy curiosity or a dangerous lack of focus. Watkin finds in the sketchbook of a trip to Italy a fascination with Romanesque art and architecture that was highly adventuresome in the very early nineteenth century. His country house, Deepdene, was an exer-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cise in the extreme picturesque, a building consisting of a meandering assemblage of dissonant elements, a purposeful collage of periods or styles. Watkin argues that this taste for variability can be traced back to a certain strain in Greek architecture, found in the Erechtheum, the oddest building on the Acropolis in Athens, with its asymmetrical volumes and radically different façades. Sometimes, reading the Bard catalogue, I am left wondering when the real Hope will stand up.

The particular archaeological and historical and philosophical controversies in which Hope took part can engage the non-specialist only up to a point. Not surprisingly, his ideas often seem to echo those of better-known thinkers and artists. At the end of his life he wrote his *Essay on the Origin and Prospects of Man*, which Roger Scruton, in an essay in the Bard catalogue, describes as a wide-ranging and hard-to-parse exploration of biological, theological, and philosophical ideas, perhaps most striking for its freedom from conventional Christian thought and its openness to the fluidity of natural and human possibility. Hope is certainly not the only figure in the history of taste who offers us no key to his enigmatic heart, but I am left wondering if Hope himself understood the extent to which his taste for the exotic confounded his admiration for the ideal.

What has kept Hope before the public for two hundred years is the peculiar power of the furniture that he designed. This is dream furniture, with elements crazily juxtaposed, as if by some scrupulously intelligent madman. Consider the "Egyptian" chairs and settee designed for his London home, works in carved wood, painted black with gilt accents. The basic furniture forms, which are more Greek or Roman than Egyptian, are decorated with various elements in an Egyptian style: carved crouching figures, figures in relief, winged creatures, palm and papyrus motifs. The way Hope joins figurative and geometric elements is not guided by any idea of grace or wholeness, but by some personal sense of visual storytelling. Neoclassical and Empire furniture does tend to have a stronger narrative quality than most furniture done before or after, what with the figurative elements alluding to Greek gods and heroes and a more general sense that these are the forms that furniture took in the noble, ancient world. But in Hope's work the allusions have a more tangled and abstracted quality—the decorations might be intentionally inscrutable, an unreadable rebus.

In his *Illustrated History of Furnishings: From the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, the greatest book ever devoted to interior decor, Mario Praz observes of these "Egyptian" pieces that "they look as if they had been made for a stage." And they are surely among the most theatrical pieces of furniture ever created. Hope's chairs and settees have the imposing dimensions of thrones, but they are the thrones of a fantasy kingdom. The "Egyptian" furniture suggests collage or montage, an obsession with the past not as orderly and knowable, but as rapturous fiction, in some sense prefiguring elements in the paintings of de Chirico or the Surrealist illustrations of Max Ernst. Hope's furniture is obdurate, hyperbolic, weirdly arcane, almost an impersonation of furniture, a joke on the idea of furniture—a form of high camp. What you cannot deny is that this is high camp with staying power, with undeniable aesthetic authority. The designer is so violently averse to anything that could be called functionality that he forces us to think about furniture all over again. The "Egyptian" chair is not a chair so much as it is a series of speculations about a chair—disquieting, perversely revolutionary. Hope's anti-functionalism provokes fresh thoughts about functionalism. Like Rietveld's 1917 armchair, with its flat planes painted in primary colors, the "Egyptian" chair is meta-furniture—a dream of what furniture might be or might become.

There was certainly a dream logic to the work of Jean-Michel Frank, who in the 1920s and 1930s preached asceticism to a hothouse Parisian clientele. This was a deluxe austerity—monkishness for the crème de la crème; and as his clientele shifted from high bohemia to high society, the cream tended to be mixed with the rarest brandies and served on solid gold spoons. Some of this stuff has mainly the look of money. No matter what he did, though, Frank remained a remarkable figure in a remarkable time.

The Parisian world between the wars, in which Frank came of age and achieved considerable fame, was a world that embraced pleasure without ever entirely forgetting the abyss that had opened in 1914. I am a little reluctant to believe that a decorator can express such primary experiences, but Frank's finest interiors unmistakably bear the mark of those years of exhilaration and anxiety, the period Americans tend to associate with Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*, his novel inspired by Sara and Gerald Murphy, the expatriate friends of Picasso and Noël Coward. (Coward's apartment was decorated by Frank in 1928.) Frank's interiors were shockingly stripped-down. Cocteau, after visiting Frank's own apartment, is said to have commented that it was a shame that the man had been robbed of all his possessions.

Cocteau meant it as a joke, but Frank's early years were indeed harrowing. His parents, wealthy German Jews, had lived in Paris since before the turn of the century. But during World War I, even as Frank's two older brothers died fighting for France, the family was regarded with suspicion by the French, and saw their assets seized, and were threatened with deportation. Frank's father committed suicide in the wake of his sons' deaths, and it was only after the war, and after considerable struggle, that Frank and his mother gained French citizenship. Although Frank entered the 1920s a wealthy young man who, having received a law degree, could pretty much do as he pleased, he had already seen the limits of European cosmopolitanism, and when disaster struck again in the 1930s, he could not have been entirely unprepared. In 1940 he made his way to South America, and he was in New York in 1941, where he committed suicide, leaping from a building as his father had done before him. He had reached safety, but perhaps not inner safety. (Among those to be consumed by the European fire would be Frank's Dutch cousin Anne.)

The rooms that Jean-Michel Frank designed in Paris can look depopulated, emptied out. He loved walls of bookcases, a few armchairs or couches, a desk and a chair, but he kept ornaments and pictures to a minimum. It was Frank's idea that the proportions of a room—some with the high ceilings characteristic of the nineteenth century, others with lower, boxier twentieth-century proportions—could speak for themselves, if only the designer let them. There is surely a period relationship between Frank's interiors and the streamlined spaces favored by Le Corbusier and Gropius and other modernist architects. But in place of the exultant reductionism of early modern architecture, Frank offered an ambiguous and perhaps pessimistic austerity more in tune with the melancholy of the harlequins and pierrots of Picasso and Gris.

In place of the optimism of early modernism, we are presented with a shedding of Third Republic excess that turns back to the neoclassicism of the eighteenth century or even perhaps the Cistercian iconoclasm of the Middle Ages. A certain modesty is what Frank aimed for even when he was working with fine

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eighteenth-century interiors, including his own apartment, which occupied a whole floor of a building on the rue Verneuil. He would sand down antique paneling and floors and leave them unfinished or rub them white. His mantelpieces and mouldings were always extremely simplified. In a sense, what he designed were passive environments—rooms awaiting occupants; but their passivity had an air of aggression, or terror, about it. There was something disquieting about the lack of adornment.

Frank was friends with and did design work for a great many writers, more than a few associated with the Surrealists. His clients included Aragon, Crevel, Mauriac, and Drieu La Rochelle. Especially striking, I think, is the living room that he designed for Nancy Cunard in 1924, for her apartment in a seventeenth-century building on the Île St. Louis. This was at the very start of his career, and like certain artists who hit their most authentic note close to the beginning of their working lives, Frank achieved here a directness that he probably never surpassed. Cunard, the heiress to the shipping fortune, had recently arrived in Paris, where she would become a considerable figure in literary circles, in a few years establishing the Hours Press, the publisher of fine limited editions of contemporary works. The room with which Frank had to work, wide and large with a vaulted ceiling, was satisfying in its own right, and he turned it into a space dedicated to the free play of the imagination—to conversation, to friendship, to reading and writing and listening to music. There is a wonderful cool deliberateness to the arrangement of objects in this large room: the austere fireplace, flanked by simple bookcases set into the wall; the boxy, upholstered couch and chairs and lamps and tables gathered around the hearth; the desk; the piano; the screen. The bare floors, the bare walls, the minimal curtains at the two tall windows—these set the furnishings in high relief, and confer upon them an almost allegorical significance, as if what we were entering were not only a comfortable room but an essay in the idea of a comfortable room.

By the end of the 1920s Frank had come to epitomize an austere hedonism that already had a long tradition in France. He was a pioneer in the elegant use of humble materials such as wicker, but he was just as likely to cover walls and furniture with leather panels custom-made in the Hermès workshops. He designed business interiors for Guerlain and Schiaparelli, and in 1935 opened a boutique on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. I do not think that his wealthiest clients inspired his best work. The music room that he did for Noël Coward in 1928 looks unpleasantly glossy, but he could sometimes go brilliantly over-the-top, the most famous example being the Parisian mansion of Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles, with its walls paneled in parchment, bronze doors, ivory leather couches and chairs, and, in an antechamber, paintings hung from elaborate red cords. The New York apartment for Nelson Rockefeller, with its walls of richly grained wood and an over-mantel by Matisse, has an almost Persian-miniature quality of coloristic richness, as if at the end of his career Frank were seeing what he could do in a completely different vein.

Frank's expansive operations necessitated the services not only of some of the finest craftsmen in Paris, but also of artists, who included the rather facile neo-Romantic painter Christian Bérard, the brilliant Cubist sculptor Henri Laurens, and, most important of all, Alberto Giacometti, who was then at the beginning of his career. Giacometti started working with Frank in 1928, when he was embarking on the Surrealist works for which he would first become known. James Lord, in his biography of Giacometti, takes their connection very seriously, observing that Frank and Giacometti "became close friends, each no doubt appreciating in the other an almost obsessive disposition to take unlimited pains for the sake of spatial relationships which most people would never have noticed." The lamps that Giacometti did for Frank, some with elongated Etruscan figures, have become famous. Less well-known but even more interesting are a large number of figurative relief works, including dancing figures, portrait heads, and studies of birds and other animals. In these vigorous yet severe images, generally done in plaster, we have a foretaste of the expressive qualities of Giacometti's postwar sculpture, with its telegraphic calligraphy and attenuated forms. Apparently the obsession with paring everything down to the essentials, which fueled Giacometti's mature vision, was something he already shared with Frank in the 1930s.

For both Frank and Hope, decoration included elements of mythologization. They were both constructing a stage on which men and women might choose to live their lives. These men were not artists or architects or craftsmen in any traditional sense, not makers of some particular thing, so much as they were impresarios of form and space, directing and inspiring others, offering through their designs and ideas the libretto that others would flesh out and transform into three-dimensional form. In the ambiguity of their vocation, in the open-endedness with which they conceived it, they suggest a line of development that would come to include such arbiters of design as Charles and Ray Eames and Buckminster Fuller, who is currently the subject of a retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art. They are all, in their different ways, philosophers of furnishings and interiors. Hope brought to his interest in Greek style and London interiors some of the evangelical spirit that animated Fuller's Dymaxion House or the Eames house in Los Angeles, which with its mixture of modern furnishings and folkloric decorations suggests an integrated way of living.

The evangelical element in these men can inspire wildly differing responses. Walking through the Fuller show at the Whitney was not an especially enjoyable experience. His achievements looked rather thin, while his philosophizing, captured on video and film clips, seemed strident and hollow—a crackpot's rap. Hope's London home apparently inspired similarly contradictory responses, with the great architect John Soane praising Hope's "public spirit," while another architect, George Dance, commented that

Ecstatic

Nine months to a year
was what the doctors gave my friend.
All summer he said he felt *ecstatic*.
That was his word. No, he hadn't

fallen in love with death.
Ecstatic was the way he thought
the world wanted him to feel—
trees swaying as he sat on his deck,

crickets in the grass, then the moon
coming out. They were all part of how
this was happening. Two months later,
when the serious pain set in,

he said he'd been wrong. *Deluded*
was his word. But why shouldn't
a man who knows he's going
to die believe he's found

some new kind of truth?
Then pain makes itself the truth.
Try to fool yourself now, it says.
Try to believe in anything but me.

LAWRENCE RAAB

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the house "excited no feelings of comfort as a dwelling." We know from Fuller and Charles Eames that people who seek to shape the environment tend to be social animals, and this was surely true of Hope and Frank as well. I find it significant that these men and their works were of interest to the novelists of their times. One of Frank's first clients was Drieu La Rochelle, a writer better known in France than in the United States, no doubt in part because he was a fascist sympathizer in the 1930s and a Nazi collaborator in the 1940s. According to Martin-Vivier, there are aspects of the protagonist of Drieu's most famous novel, *Gilles*, that suggest Frank, and there are also interiors in the book that are based on Frank's designs. Martin-Vivier sees echoes of Frank in Jacques de Lacretelle's novel *Silbermann* and in François Mauriac's *Destins*, where there is "a young character named Bob, most likely gay and an occasional interior designer, who is indeed reminiscent of Frank." Watkin, in his earlier book on Hope, observes that in T. S. Surr's novel *A Winter in London*, from 1806, there is a description of a mansion that is "almost certainly based on Thomas Hope's," and among Hope's closest friends and greatest admirers was the novelist Maria Edgeworth.

Perhaps it is not surprising that novelists, working in what is the most open-ended and fluid of literary forms, should be drawn to interior designers, whose work is almost diabolically difficult to define. Like the novelist, the decorator can be a poet, a portraitist, a historian, a psychologist, a social critic—and sometimes all at once. Balzac, let us not forget, was a manic collector who lovingly described the room where Cousin Pons, the insatiable collector in the novel of that name, kept the Old Master paintings that he had discovered in junk shops and bought for a song. Writers who are sensitive to the environments in which people live will quite naturally take an interest in the work of interior decorators, who weave a sort of fiction out of curtains and rugs and chairs and couches—a fiction in which people then proceed to live their real lives. The work that Hope and Frank did was at once insistently personal and strangely utopian, both realistic and romantic. In their way, they too were weaving a kind of fiction. To look at the wildly over-the-top eclecticism of Hope's "Egyptian" chair or the ascetic severity of Frank's living room for Nancy Cunard is to see design as a speculative enterprise: not a study of things as they are but a search for the way that things ought to be. After their own fashion, both Thomas Hope and Jean-Michel Frank were asking the biggest question of all: how should we live? ◆

Leon Aron

THE PROBLEMATIC PAGES

To understand Vladimir Putin, we must understand his view of Russian history.

In memory of Alexander Solzhenitsyn

I.

On June 18, 2007, a national conference of high school historians and teachers of social sciences was convened in Moscow. The agenda called for the discussion of "the acute problems in the teaching of modern Russian history," and for "the development of the state standards of education." It soon became clear that the real purpose of the gathering was to present to the delegates—or, more precisely, to impress upon them—two recently finished "manuals for teachers." One of them, to be published in a pilot print run of ten thousand, was called *Noveyshaya Istoriya Rossii, 1945–2006 GG: Kniga Dlya Uchitelya*, or *The Modern History of Russia, 1945–2006: A Teacher's Handbook*. It was the work of a certain A.V. Filippov, and it was designed to become the standard Russian high school textbook of Russian history, scheduled to be introduced into classrooms this month.

Unusually heavy artillery was deployed in the textbook's support. Speaking at the conference were Andrey Fursenko, the minister of education and science, and Vladislav Surkov, the Kremlin chief ideologist and first deputy chief of staff. Surkov is the inventor of the concept of "sovereign democracy," which became the centerpiece of the Putin regime's worldview, justifying authoritarianism in politics, re-centralization in economics, and anti-Western truculence in foreign policy. (As Russian wits like to say, "sovereign democracy" and "democracy" are as different as "electric chair" and "chair.")

The project's origin and the author's provenance were soon disclosed by liberal websites, which these days are looking more and more like a kind of cyber *samizdat*. The textbook's editor, Alexandr Filippov, who is listed as the sole author on the cover, is a deputy director of the "National Laboratory of Foreign Policy," which, in his own words, "assists the state organs, including the presidential administration, in the development and implementation of foreign policy decisions." He later confirmed the rumor that it was the presidential administration, along with the ministry of education, that had "invited" him to assemble the manuscript, making the textbook nothing less than an expression of Vladimir Putin's view of Soviet history.

The author of one of the chapters turned out to be Pavel Danilin, the editor-in-chief of the Kremlin.org website and deputy director of the Effective Politics Foundation, which is headed by the top Kremlin propagandist Gleb Pavlovsky. Danilin—who is also affiliated with the "Young Guard of the United Russia," the Komsomol-like helper of the United Russia "ruling" party—was quoted as saying that "our goal is to make the first textbook in which Russian history will look not as a depressing sequence of misfortunes and mistakes but as something to instill pride in one's country. It is in precisely this way that teachers must teach history and not smear the Motherland with mud." Addressing on his blog teachers and scholars who might be less than enthusiastic about such an approach, Danilin, who is thirty years old and is not known to have ever taught anything, wrote:

> You may ooze bile but you will teach the children by those books that you will be given and in the way that is needed by Russia. And as to the noble nonsense that you carry in your misshapen goateed heads, either it will be ventilated out of them or you yourself will be ventilated out of teaching.... It is impossible to let some Russophobe shit-stinker (*govnyuk*), or just any amoral type, teach Russian history. It is necessary to clear the filth, and if it does not work, then clear it by force.

Leon Aron, a resident scholar and director of Russian studies at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author, most recently, of Russia's Revolution: Essays 1989–2006.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The official promotion of the history textbook resumed after the summer vacation, when the ministry of education and science scheduled teachers' conferences in seven Russian regions, at which the authors and the government functionaries were to be joined by the "representatives of the president's administration" and those local governments. To show how it should be done, a meeting took place last September at the Academic Educational Association for the Humanities, with Moscow's top education functionaries, university presidents, and directors of research institutes on hand, including the director of the Institute of General History and the rector of Moscow State University. Representing the Kremlin was Dzhokhan Pollyeva, secretary of the Presidential Council for Science, Technologies, and Education, who called on historians and education administrators to wish the textbook's authors a great success, and assured the audience that there would be sufficient funding for all the seminars and courses required for the training of teachers to support the curriculum.

In fact, the clearest expression of the Kremlin's goodwill toward the textbook came two months earlier, with an invitation to the conference participants to visit President Putin at his residence in Novo-Ogaryovo, outside Moscow. In a long introduction to the discussion that ensued, Putin complained that there was "mishmash" (*kasha*) in the heads of teachers of history and social sciences, and that this dire situation in the teaching of Russian history needed to be corrected by the introduction of "common standards." (Four days later, a new law, introduced in the Duma and passed with record speed in eleven days, authorized the ministry of education and science to determine which textbooks be "recommended" for school use and to determine which publishers would print them.) There followed some instructive exchanges:

> *A conference participant*: In 1990–1991 we disarmed ideologically. [We adopted] a very uncertain, abstract ideology of all-human values.… It is as if we were back in school, or even kindergarten. We were told [by the West]: you have rejected communism and are building democracy, and we will judge when and how you have done.… In exchange for our disarming ideologically we have received this abstract recipe: you become democrats and capitalists and we will control you.
> *Putin*: Your remark about someone who assumes the posture of teacher and begins to lecture us is of course absolutely correct. But I would like to add that this, undoubtedly, is also an instrument of influencing our country. This is a tried and true trick. If someone from the outside is getting ready to grade us, this means that he arrogates the right to manage [us] and is keen to continue to do so.
> *Participant*: In the past two decades, our youth have been subjected to a torrent of the most diverse information about our historical past. This information [contains] different conceptual approaches, interpretations, or value judgments, and even chronologies. In such circumstances, the teacher is likely to …
> *Putin (interrupting)*: Oh, they will write, all right. You see, many textbooks are written by those who are paid in foreign grants. And naturally they are dancing the polka ordered by those who pay them. Do you understand? And unfortunately [such textbooks] find their way to schools and colleges.

And later, concluding the session, Putin declared:

> As to some problematic pages in our history—yes, we've had them. But what state hasn't? And we've had fewer of such pages than some other [states]. And ours were not as horrible as those of some others. Yes, we have had some terrible pages: let us remember the events beginning in 1937, let us not forget about them. But other countries have had no less, and even more. In any case, we did not pour chemicals over thousands of kilometers or drop on a small country seven times more bombs than during the entire World War II, as it was in Vietnam, for instance. Nor did we have other black pages, such as Nazism, for instance. All sorts of things happen in the history of every state. And we cannot allow ourselves to be saddled with guilt—they'd better think of themselves.

II.

Since a great deal is at stake in the understanding of history in Russia today, a few things need to be said about the Russian president's view of Russia's past. For Vladimir Putin's reading of the Soviet Union's record represents nothing less than a repeal of glasnost and its accomplishments in the cause of truth. "Fewer," he says; and "not as horrible"; and others are "even more" terrible. And also that there was no terror before 1937. So the old version, the Soviet version, of the "repressions" perpetrated by the Soviet regime, according to which they were confined to the slaughter of the party nobility, the top military commanders, and the intelligentsia during the "Great Terror" of 1937–1938, has now been officially reinstated.

In 1988, the Marxist historian and Soviet dissident Roy Medvedev attempted to add up the number of those "repressed" (that is, arrested) prior to 1937. His estimate was seventeen million to eighteen million people, of which "no less than" ten million perished. Oleg Khlevnyuk's definitive study of the OGPU–NKVD–KGB archives, in *The History of Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror*, puts the number of people convicted between 1930 and 1936 at twelve million (or one-eighth of the adult population of the Soviet Union, based on the January 1937 census). This is far more than the estimated 8.6 million that were convicted in the Great Terror and its aftermath in 1937–1940. Medvedev could have added that the first "special designation" (*osobogo naznacheniya*) extermination camp was set up on the Solovki Islands in the White Sea in 1923. One of the methods of execution there was to tie the doomed victims to a log and push it down "a long and steep staircase." Half a minute later, witnesses remembered, a "shapeless bloody mass" reached the foot of the steps.

The defendants in the first show trials in 1928–1930 were not former party leaders, but the "wreckers" from among mining engineers, economists, historians, agronomists, and veterinarians. A third of a million people were arrested in 1930, of whom 20,000 were shot and 100,000 sent to camps, where their chances of surviving a ten-year sentence were very slim. (When we were college students together in Moscow in the mid-1970s, I heard Khrushchev's grandson, Lyosha Adzhubei, tell his grandfather's story of a German delegation that came to Russia in the 1930s to learn about the organization of the Gulag.)

And in another deviation from the official Putinist myth, of the five to seven million arrested in the "Great Terror" of 1937–1938—by Medvedev's estimate, at least one million were shot—three to five million were "ordinary people," not Party members. At Kuropaty, near Minsk, one of the hundreds and perhaps thousands of Soviet mass execution sites, people were shot daily from 1937 to 1941. The exhumation of unmarked (and carefully hidden) mass graves by local activists in 1987–1988 revealed holes in the skulls made by handgun bullets shot point-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

blank into the back of the head. Judging by the things found around the site—wallets, shopping bags—and by the clothes and shoes found on the bodies, many appeared not to have spent any time in prison, which means that they had not been given any judicial proceeding but were taken to the forest directly from their homes. Altogether, 510 mass graves were found with an average of 200 bodies in each: 102,000 people. That is probably more than all the people in the top layers of the Party.

When they were suddenly allowed to be heard in 1987–1988, the voices of victims and, occasionally, of their tormentors filled the Soviet media and meeting halls. Sometimes, according to witnesses' testimony, the victims were made to stand on the edge of the ditch, their hands tied and mouths gagged, while the executioners aimed more powerful rifles at the sides of the heads of those on either end of the row, attempting to kill at least two people with one bullet. "They were saving ammo," a witness explained, and also "showing their professionalism." Were they still remembered, they, too, could add precision to Putin's "no less–even more" moral calculus.

It is true that there was no "Nazism" in the Soviet Union, and no Auschwitz. But six weeks in the Kolyma camps, in northeastern Siberia—with temperatures reaching negative 50° Celsius, and sixteen-hour workdays of chipping off gold ore with pickaxes or hauling it in wooden wheelbarrows on four hours of sleep, and 400 grams of bread (for those meeting sadistic daily work quotas that even two men working together could not always achieve), and the tepid greasy water passed as soup, and a sliver of salty herring—all this, Mr. President, turned a healthy adult man into a walking skeleton, dying of dystrophia, wracked by the bloody diarrhea of pellagra, and oozing pus and blood from frostbitten fingers and toes. (The great Russian writer Varlaam Shalamov, who miraculously survived Kolyma, tells the story in his beautiful and unbearable *Kolyma Tales*.) Hundreds of thousands more perished from overwork, disease, starvation, and accidents at the various "canalization" and "industrialization" sites of the first Five-Year Plans. To recall Solzhenitsyn's grim refrain in *The Gulag Archipelago*: we did not have the gas chambers, very true, we did not....

During the "collectivization" of 1929–1932, an estimated one million peasant households were herded into boxcars, driven for days often with little food or water (the dead, mostly babies and the elderly, were thrown off the moving trains), and then unloaded to "special settlements" (*spetsposeleniya*) in the frozen tundra, the swamps of the Russian Northeast, the Urals, or the bare Kazakh steppes. Most peasants—between six and eight million—died in what may well have been the greatest demographic catastrophe to hit Europe since the Middle Ages: the man-made famine of 1932–1933, following the "requisition" by the state of all grain, including seed. The precise number of the collectivization's victims may never be known, with estimates ranging from the very conservative seven million to eleven million villagers, mostly in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, southern Russia, and the North Caucasus. (Ten years later Stalin would tell Churchill that ten million had died.) In 1988, the leading Kazakh writer Olzhas Suleymenov told a party conference that out of six million of his compatriots before the collectivization, three million remained. (This year Ukraine officially commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the "Hlodomor," or "death from hunger," designated as genocide. How long will it be before Kazakhstan does the same?)

For the survivors, there was the edict of August 7, 1932, personally drafted by Stalin, which meted out "the highest measure of social defense"—that is, shooting—with the confiscation of all property or,

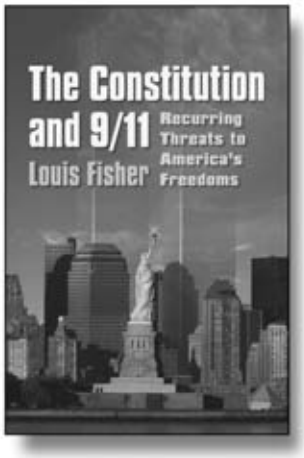
The Constitution and 9/11

Recurring Threats to America's Freedoms

Louis Fisher

"*The Constitution and 9/11* provides a comprehensive, striking, and disturbing analysis of executive misuse of power that is made all the more compelling by placing it in a rich and fascinating historical context. No better book is available for placing post-9/11 government actions in the matrix of history and explaining how executive power has degraded the Constitution and citizen rights."—**William G. Weaver**, coauthor of *Presidential Secrecy and the Law*

408 pages, Cloth $45.00, Paper $19.95



NEW IN PAPERBACK

Intelligence Matters

The CIA, the FBI, Saudi Arabia, and the Failure of America's War on Terror

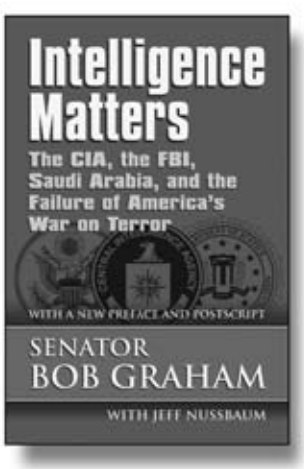
With a new preface and postscript

Senator Bob Graham

with Jeff Nussbaum

"A startling, authoritative book that should make you plenty angry. The outgrowth of an investigation your tax dollars paid for, it tells us that the government of Saudi Arabia had a central role in 9/11—and your government covered it up. Wrongly overshadowed by *The 9/11 Commission Report*, it's essential reading."—**Anthony Summers**, author of *Official and Confidential* and *Arrogance of Power*

360 pages, Paper $17.95


Intelligence Matters
The CIA, the FBI, Saudi Arabia, and the Failure of America's War on Terror
WITH A NEW PREFACE AND POSTSCRIPT
SENATOR
BOB GRAHAM
WITH JEFF NUSSBAUM

University Press of Kansas

785-864-4155 · Fax 785-864-4586 · www.kansaspress.ku.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in "extenuating circumstances," ten years of camp, for "theft of kolkhoz property." The decree became known as "the law on five ears of wheat," because its most conspicuous victims were starving peasant children and their mothers, who ate or tucked into their pockets a few grains while collecting wheat or rye left on kolkhoz fields after reaping. (Grain found in mouse burrows was to be counted kolkhoz property as well.) To make sure that peasant children (and those of the "enemies of the people") did not get away with anything, another decree in 1932 lowered the legal age of defendants to twelve years. The children were to be tried as adults and to be "subject to the entire range of sentencing." When the comrades in the provinces asked for clarification, the Politburo affirmed that "entire range" included execution.

And—right you are, Mr. President—no bombs were dropped in 1939–1941 on western Ukraine, western Belorussia, Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, Latvia, Estonia, or Lithuania, which were all deeded to the Soviet Union in 1939 under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, or in 1944–1945, when they were reconquered, or "liberated." Instead there was a "knock on the door" at two in the morning, to recall the title of a fine novella about the arrests and deportations in formerly Romanian Bessarabia. The total number of people arrested and deported (again, an estimate) was at least two million in 1939–1940 and two to three million in 1944–1945. How many were executed or died in camps? Two hundred thousand? Three hundred thousand? Half a million?

There were also no bombings of the Volga German Republic in 1941, nor of Chechnya, Ingushetia, or the Tatar villages in the Crimea in 1944. Like the "kulaks" ten years before, all these victims were arrested and deported—again, as with the "kulaks," to the last pregnant woman and suckling baby—and dumped in the wilderness. The total of the "resettled" is estimated at three million, of which as many as a million may have died in the first few years of exposure, starvation, and disease. Of the entire Chechen nation of 489,000, an estimated 200,000 perished.

Scoring points in his obsessive and never-ending debate with the United States was not the sole goal of Putin's declaration at Novo-Ogaryovo. His remarks were also designed to establish guidelines for the new Russian historiography embodied in the textbook. The first axiom appears to be this: although there were "mistakes" and "dark spots," what mattered was the survival and strengthening of the state—by whatever means necessary. And, by that standard, the Soviet Union was a glittering success, and the costs were justified—especially, as we have already seen, since the main victims of Stalinism were the elite, not the ordinary people. The second axiom of modern Russian history according to Putin is that the Soviet Union was a "besieged fortress," forever under threat of attack by the West, and that the machinations of the West were responsible not only for Soviet foreign policy but also for a great deal of domestic misfortune. Finally, and most importantly, the overarching aim of this and all future historical narratives is the "normalization" of the monstrosity of Soviet totalitarianism, the manufacture of justifications and excuses for its crimes.

While pages and pages of *The Modern History of Russia* overflow with official statistics attesting to the dazzling achievements of Soviet economy—the production of mineral fertilizers grew six-fold; of electricity, five-fold; of steel, double—or with positively loving recitations of the quality and quantity of Soviet military hardware, the Gulag is mentioned by name once. And this sole mention is by way of cautioning the reader against the "exaggeration" of its "contribution" to the economy: after all, there were only 2.6 million prisoners (in 1950), compared with 40.4 million in the country's workforce outside the barbed wire.

Among the many eyewitness accounts inserted into the textbook's narrative under the rubric "How It Was" (*Kak eto bylo*), there is not a single one from the flood of memoirs published in the late 1980s about the hell of the camps or "investigative prisons," where "testimony" was beaten out of the arrested; not a single quotation from *Kolyma Tales*, or Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, or *The Department of the Useless Things* by Yuri Dombrovsky (another splendid Russian writer who miraculously survived three stints, amounting to a quarter of a century, in the Gulag), or from the brilliantly imagined prison and camp chapters in the greatest Russian novel of the twentieth century, Vassily Grossman's *Life and Fate*. The "Doctors' Plot" of 1953 merits a paragraph—but not the next step, which only Stalin's death thwarted: the planned public hangings of traitorous Jews on Red Square and a countrywide pogrom to be followed by the exile of more than two million Soviet Jews to the Far East.

And, speaking of pogroms, the textbook has this to say about inter-ethnic relations under Brezhnev: "The degree of consolidation of Soviet nationalities and their yearning for mutual closeness were especially pronounced in comparison with other multi-ethnic states. In the USA, for instance, Ku Klux Klan–like organizations were operating almost openly [and] every now and then bloody mass confrontations occurred on racial or national grounds." This, about a society in which one's ethnicity was the defining characteristic of the individual in his relations with others; in which the Azeri hated the Armenians, and the Abkhaz hated the Georgians, and the Uzbeks hated the Kirgiz (and would start killing one another as soon as the totalitarian controls were relaxed, while others, such as Moldovans, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, and Georgians, bolted out of the happy union even before it collapsed); in which ethnic Russian "masses" seem to despise all other nationalities and commonly use slurs and derogatory terms for the Ukrainians, the Armenians, the peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus. There is also not a word about state anti-Semitism under Brezhnev and anti-Jewish discrimination in employment, travel abroad, and university admissions; or about the internal passports in which "nationality" followed name and address; or about Moscow State University's admissions policies in the second half of the 1970s, when the applicants had to put down not only the last names of their parents but also those of their grandparents, so as to help the university detect the Jews. Those with only one Jewish grandparent, it was widely believed, had a chance.

III.

The sections on foreign policy in *The Modern History of Russia* could have come directly from Soviet textbooks. The origins of the Cold War are covered in three sentences. The United States was bent on "world domination." The Soviet Union's might was in America's way. A "serious confrontation ensued." Churchill's Fulton speech on March 5, 1946, the "Iron Curtain" speech, was a declaration of war, and the reliable Stalin is cited at length from a *Pravda* interview to that effect. Since there is no analysis, no alternative view, and certainly no refutation of Stalin's words, the Russian schoolchildren are supposed to accept what he said at face value:

> *Pravda*: May Mr. Churchill's speech be considered as damaging the cause of peace and security?
> *Stalin*: Undoubtedly so. In essence, Mr. Churchill has taken the position of a warmonger. . . . It must be noted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> that in this regard Mr. Churchill and his friends are remarkably like Hitler and his friends.... Undoubtedly that Mr. Churchill's viewpoint is a viewpoint of war, a call for a war with the USSR.

Nor did the planning of war against the Soviet Union stop at "concepts." Russian high schoolers will learn from this textbook that already in May 1945 Churchill was reviewing a war plan against the Soviet Union, and by November 1945 the targets for the nuclear attack on the Soviet Union had been selected. (Why, then—one hopes a bright Russian girl or boy will ask—was the Soviet Union not bombed by the bloodthirsty warmongers, given that it would not explode its own nuclear charge until four years later?)

The text does not dwell on what might have made its "former allies" suspicious of Moscow's intentions in Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe and thus shaped what became known as the "Cold War mentality": the arrest and trial (on charges of "sabotaging the Red Army") of the sixteen leaders of the Polish anti-Nazi underground, loyal to the London-based government-in-exile, after they were promised immunity and presented themselves to the Soviet headquarters; the squeezing out of non-communists from the governments of Eastern Europe; the rigged election in Poland, in direct contravention of the Soviet Union's pledge in Yalta that there would be a free election there in which all "anti-Nazi and democratic forces could participate"; the later installation of murderous totalitarian satrapies in Eastern Europe, and the arrests of hundreds of thousands of "members of the bourgeoisie," the intelligentsia, and local political notables (firstly of the non-communist left), and the show trials and the executions, after horrible torture, of local communist leaders such as Traicho Kostov in Bulgaria, Laszlo Rajk in Hungary, and Rudolf Slansky in Czechoslovakia.

Instead, Russian students will learn how regimes of "people's democracy" were established "with assistance of the Soviet military administration" in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, and how, as a result, "the communists came to power," and how "overall, the population, which wanted social reforms, supported the communists' coming to power." The Sovietization of Eastern Europe is explained by the need to defend vital and perfectly legitimate national security interests:

> It was impossible to sacrifice the security of the USSR. No Russian government could have afforded to do so. Stalin could not possibly agree to U.S.-British demands for the return of the pre-war governments to Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Yugoslavia. For such a return would have restored the cordon sanitaire [a stretch of pro-Western, "bourgeois" "buffer" states along Bolshevik Russia's western borders] erected against the USSR in those lands. Stalin wanted to create a broad band of communist-led states, which was to stretch between the Soviet Union and Western Europe. The "Polish gate" cost the USSR huge sacrifices, and the Soviet government could not simply hand over the key to it to Washington.

From the beginning, then, the Cold War was a one-sided affair: the West attacking, the Soviet Union defending itself as best it could. Among the main lines of this gratuitous assault on Russia was ideological warfare: "having failed to dislodge the Soviet regime by force," *The Modern History of Russia* explains, the United States "unleashed an ideological war" whose "main tool" was Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. (And yet Radio Moscow had broadcast in every language under the sun for decades before and after the war, not to mention the thousands of pro-Soviet—and often Soviet-funded—newspapers and magazines around the world, and the incessant "peace" "congresses," "conferences," "movements," and "appeals" of the 1940s and early 1950s.) A few pages later the textbook acknowledges the ruling Soviet doctrine of the "impossibility of peaceful co-existence between of the socialist and bourgeois ideology," that is, the permanent ideological war on the West until the bitter end—without recognizing, of course, the implications of this admission.

The Cold War—and, by a very short extension, the United States—was to blame even for the reversal of the very mild "liberalization" allowed by Stalin during the Great Patriotic War. For, as far as the textbook's authors are concerned, it goes without saying that no "democratization of the domestic regime" could be allowed by Stalin. The "conditions of hostile encirclement," the reconstruction of the economy, and "the forging of military capability necessary to resist the U.S. and its allies" required the "ideological consolidation of the population" and thus the "strengthening of the state's ideological control over society."

And whatever problems the Cold War may have caused along the way, the Soviet Union—until Gorbachev, of course—marched from victory to victory in world affairs. Even the withdrawal of nuclear-tipped missiles from Cuba in 1962 ended in a "defeat" for the United States. Another victory was won in the Vietnam war, which had been caused by the "U.S. aggression against North Vietnam" aimed at the "liquidation of the communist regime in North Vietnam." In its capacity as "the guarantor of world stability," the Soviet Union had no choice but to "state its readiness to render North Vietnam the assistance necessary to repulse the aggression."

The account of the Soviet role in the Arab-Israeli conflict in *The Modern History of Russia* has nothing about the Soviet Union's massive shipments of armaments and material to Egypt and Syria in 1966–1967; and not a word about the Egyptians' massing troops in Sinai, and Syria doing the same on the Golan Heights, in May 1967; or about the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba by Egypt; or of the Soviet representative at the United Nations blocking any possibility of the Security Council's addressing Israel's grave concerns (and thus the resolution of the crisis by peaceful means). Instead, the textbook repeats the canard of Israel's imminent attack on Syria—the same lie that Moscow communicated at the time to Egypt and Syria, thus pushing Egypt still closer to war.

The Six Day War segment of the story concludes with Israel condemned as "aggressor" by "Resolution 247 of the Security Council" and, peace-loving to the core and unwilling to keep company with warmongers of any kind, the Soviet Union's breaking diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. In fact—but how could any Russian high school student know this?—U.N. Security Council Resolution 247, adopted in March 1968, reauthorized the U.N. peacekeeping force in Cyprus. The textbook's authors must have meant Resolution 237, of June 14, 1967—except that there was nothing in that resolution about Israel's being an "aggressor." And the Yom Kippur War of 1973, when Soviet-armed Egypt attacked Israel, is not mentioned at all.

The nuclear arms race was also America's fault. No mention is made of the Soviet Union's annual churning out of more tanks than the rest of the world combined, to add to the tens of thousands that were already deployed in Eastern Europe. There is nothing about the deployment of the mobile intermediate missiles SS-20 armed with three nuclear warheads and targeted at western Europe; and nothing about the shooting down of Korean Airlines Flight 007, with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

269 passengers and crew, by the Soviet Air Force on September 1, 1983.

When all is said and done, the "rigorously centralized character of the political and economic system of government of the Soviet era"—the word "totalitarian," which became virtually inseparable from the definition of the Soviet regime during the glasnost revolution of the late 1980s, and made its way into Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's speeches, is not used once in the Putinist textbook—is not to be understood as a product of the deadly ideology of a "utopia in power," to recall the marvelous title of an "alternative" Soviet history by two expatriate Russian scholars in the 1980s. Nor were the "psychological peculiarities of Stalin's personality," as the authors coyly phrase it, among the primary causes. No, the responsibility for the bestial regime rests with "objective conditions": historical, social, economic. The Russian national tradition is that of "centralization" in the service of "modernization," and Stalinism was no different, except that the constant threat of invasion necessitated that "modernization" be especially speedy, which had the consequence of making the regime "tougher." Nothing unusual about that. Stalin was no more "tough and merciless" than Bismarck, who united the German lands by "iron and blood." Why, even such allegedly "soft" and "flexible" political systems as that of the United States—the quotation marks are in the original—tend to evolve toward "hard forms of political organization" under threat, as happened after September 11.

As for the "measures of coercion"—the word "terror," like "totalitarianism," also does not seem to be in the authors' vocabulary—the "expedited modernization" called for a "corresponding system of power" and an apparatus capable of the "realization of the course." Producing such an "apparatus" and making it "effective" were tasks that may be accomplished "by a variety of means, which included political repression." The pursuit of the "maximal effectiveness of the governing apparatus" explained the fact that, "according to Russian and foreign historians," the "primary victim" of the "repressions" between 1930 and 1950 was the ruling class.

In the "plus" column of its "on-the-one-hand, on-the-other-hand" assessment of Stalin, the textbook declares him "the most successful leader of the USSR," responsible for industrialization, the "cultural revolution," the world's best "system of education," the "elimination of unemployment," and also for the ultra-effective "machinery of power." Conversely, Brezhnev's inability to forge an equally "effective" elite management—notwithstanding his achieving nuclear parity with the United States, the feat that forever secures his place in the pantheon of greatest Russian leaders and the nation's undying gratitude—"played a fatal role" in the Soviet Union's demise.

IV.

There is nothing new, of course, in these distortions of Russian history, or in the czar acting as historian-in-chief. "Like Providence in reverse, the Russian government seeks to arrange for the better not the future, but the past," wrote Alexander Herzen, Russia's first true (and still rather lonely) liberal. Count Alexander von Benchendorff, the first head of the infamous Third Department of His Majesty's Chancery—the secret political police, or the Gendarmes, set up by Nicholas I in 1826—gave this instruction to Russian historians: "Russia's past was wonderful, its present is more than superlative, and when it comes to her future, it is above anything that the most daring imagination could conjure. This is the point of view from which Russia's history must be viewed and written." (Putin has added a portrait of Nicholas I to the busts and portraits of Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, and Alexander II in the antechamber of the president's office in the Kremlin.)

Stalin began, in 1934, with question marks and exclamation points in the margins of a high school history textbook, and four years later produced extensive editorial notes and insertions into the drafts of the *Short Course History of the VKP(b)*—the acronym stands for the Russian equivalent of the All-Union Communist Party (the Bolsheviks)—which established the guidelines for the writing of Soviet history for the next fifty years. (Stalin's notes and interpolations, in small but perfectly legible round letters in black pen, may soon be viewed on the site of Yale University's "Cold War Archives" project, led by the indefatigable Jonathan Brent.) A comparison between Stalin's and Putin's interventions in Russian historiography seems obvious. The first time as tragedy, the second time as farce? But there is nothing farcical about the new round of mendacity in the narrative of Russia's past. The stakes are too high.

The important point about Putin's reactionary revisionism is that this time the lies are appearing *after* the rehabilitation of the truth. With the advent of glasnost—a genuinely moral revolution, and a fearless society-wide soul-searching, and an outburst of decency and courage, and an explosion of journalistic and intellectual excellence, which almost redeemed the previous seven decades of cruelty and lies—an accurate account of Russia's history was established as a condition of Russia's revival. The previously taught version of the country's history was found to be so "monstrously distorted," in *Izvestia's* phrase, that the national high school examination in history, required for graduation and the diploma, was abolished in 1988. The exam was restored the following year, but the old textbooks remained invalid and new ones were being readied for the ninth and tenth grades.

First and foremost, in the great glasnost moment, it was deemed imperative to create the political and social mechanisms that "would firmly block any tilt toward [our] self-exterminating past," as the leading literary magazine *Znamya* put it in the fall of 1987. Such mechanisms would not work without moral and cultural reform, which would consist in unflinching self-reckoning and self-discovery. Above all, the renewal of Russia required a sober and remorseless burning away (*vyzhiganie*) of any self-delusion. What we conceal and what we fear is one and the same, wrote a contributor to perhaps the finest collection of glasnost essays, *Inogo ne dano*, or *There Is No Other Way*, in 1988. If hiding the truth is a sign of fear, then the revelation of truth is a sign of the conquest of fear. The road toward a society in which the free individual flourishes, suggested a literary historian, lies "only through truth, through really honest self-learning (*samopoznanie*) and self-awareness (*samosoznanie*)." Could it be that all our misfortunes—including, of course, the horrors of Stalinism—are "because we have not learned to respect the truth, the truth of our history?" asked a leading political philosopher. If so, "we must stop deceiving ourselves.... We can no longer evade truth, engage in myth-creation. We must trust the truth."

The passionate quest for such a history began with the recovery of the true dimensions of the devastation wrought by Stalinism. This national act of acknowledgment and commemoration was thought to be more than a tribute to the dead. The horrors that Stalinism visited on Russia had to be recognized in shame and remorse, shuddered and wailed over, and, most importantly, redeemed by

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the creation of a state and a society that would never again allow the country to be ruled by terror. One must be "horrified to become brave enough" to condemn and forever break with the past in which most of one's life was lived, declared a letter to the flagship of glasnost, the weekly newspaper *Moskovskie novosti*, in 1988.

It was not too long ago, then, that what Anatoly Rybakov, the author of the immensely popular anti-Stalinist saga *Deti Arbata*, or *The Children of Arbat*, called "moral cleansing" was the order of the day. Confronting Stalinism was a matter of the "spiritual health of the country," its "spiritual hygiene." The troubadours of glasnost seemed confident that Russia would emerge from this merciless self-examination as if from a *banya*, a sauna: bleary-eyed and with red marks left by the birch twigs, but—at last!—clean, light, sober, serious, and ready for hard and honest work. The time "of societal penitence and moral cleansing is come," declared one of the Soviet Union's most beloved film actors, Georgy Zhzhyonov, himself a former prisoner in Stalin's camps. "What a wonderful, capacious word is 'repentance'!" seconded Russia's finest eye surgeon, Svyatoslav Fyodorov, whose innovative techniques returned sight to thousands of Russians (and whose father, too, perished in Stalin's purges). "How fitting it is for our times! To repent, to tell all without holding anything back in order to begin a better life!"

The full tale of the nightmare had to be recovered and retold not only as credible and accurate history, but also as a parable to be read anew by every man and woman, every boy and girl. The memoirs of survivors, which schoolteachers were instructed to read to students, were thought by a literary critic at *Ogonyok* magazine, that other engine of glasnost, to be the moral equivalent of "inoculations against cholera, smallpox, or plague." Insofar as Stalinism justified violence in pursuit of an ideal society, and offered absolution of guilt in exchange for blind faith, or complicity, or acquiescence, in terror and lies, de-Stalinization heralded the end of Soviet history's exclusion from ethical judgment, the end of an "extra-moral" (*vnemoral'noe*) attitude to history, as a young woman instructor in the humanities put it. De-Stalinization meant a re-moralization of Soviet history and a return to normal historiography, which, in turn, promised to return to the Soviet people their country's true history. And so the eventual publication of the first honest textbook of Russian history, a veteran schoolteacher wrote in *Izvestia* in July 1987, would be an event of national significance.

As usual in the greatest Russian debates, the classics were deployed to excellent effect. One of Russia's finest poets, Fyodor Tyutchev, was invoked: "For society, as well as for an individual, self-knowledge is the first condition of any progress." And then the uncannily wise Chekhov, by way of Trofimov's soliloquy in Act II of *The Cherry Orchard*: "We don't have a definite attitude toward the past. We only philosophize, complain of ennui, or drink vodka. But it is so abundantly clear that to begin living in the present we must first redeem our past and be done with it, and we can redeem it only by pain and by an extraordinary and constant labor." And Tolstoy, in a magnificent essay on the sadistic punishment of soldiers in the reign of Nicholas I and the moral imperative of remembrance:

> We are saying: why remember? Why remember the past? It is no longer here, is it? Why should we remember it? Why disturb the people? What do you mean: why remember? If I was gravely ill and I was cured, I will always remember [the deliverance] with joy. Only then will I not want to remember, when I am still ill, in the same way or even more seriously, and I wish to deceive myself.... Why remember that which has passed? Passed? What has passed? How could it have passed—that which we not only have not started to eradicate and heal but are even afraid to call by its name? How could a brutal illness be cured only by our saying that it is gone? And it is not going away and will not and cannot go away until we admit that we are ill. In order to cure an illness one must first admit that one has it.

And now, to turn all this back, to reverse this great movement of honesty, to dash this splendid hope and retard this amazing transformation, comes the cynicism and the corruption of the past eight years—and this wretched war in Georgia, in which, for the first time, post-Soviet Russia appears determined to resurrect invasion and occupation as tools of its foreign policy. When Russia's historians come to compose their indictment against Putinism, as they surely will, the charges will prominently include Vladimir Putin's unforgivable interruption of his country's renaissance and the subversion of its attainment to moral maturity. ◆

Michael Ignatieff
THE DUTY TO RESCUE

FREEDOM'S BATTLE: THE ORIGINS OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION
By Gary J. Bass
(Knopf, 528 pp., $35)

Gary J. Bass has written a wonderfully intelligent and sardonic history of the moral *causes célèbres* of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Byron and Greek independence in 1825, the European campaign to save the Maronite Christians of Syria and Lebanon in 1860, Gladstone and the Bulgarian atrocities in 1876, Henry Morgenthau and the Armenian genocide of 1915. Bass resurrects these forgotten causes to remind us that humanitarian intervention did not begin in the 1990s. For nearly two hundred years, the impulse to save strangers from massacre has rivaled *raison d'état* as a driver of European statecraft. As we respond—or do not respond—to the Rwandas and Darfurs of the future, we can still learn from this forgotten history.

Bass expertly brings to life a rich panoply of characters: Byron, Gladstone, Disraeli, Metternich, and Hugo, to name just a few. The stock villain of the piece is none other than the knavishly devious Count Ignatiev, chief advocate of Russian expansion into southern Europe in the 1860s and 1870s. He makes an excellent villain, oozing charm from every pore, lying his way through the chancelleries of Europe, inciting the suppressed nationalities of the Ottoman Empire to revolt and then seeking to subject them to the none-too-tender mercies of the czar. He happens to have been my great-grandfather, and alas, Bass gets him just right.

Freedom's Battle is full of fascinating and ironic incident: Byron giving his life for Greek independence but confessing that he could not stand the Greeks; Metternich raging that humanitarian

Michael Ignatieff is a Canadian member of parliament and a former member of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intervention was nothing more than a "villainous game which takes religion and humanity for a pretext in order to upset all regular order of things"; Disraeli dismissing the calls to save the Bulgarians as "coffee-house babble brought by an anonymous Bulgarian," only to find himself overwhelmed by the tidal wave of Gladstone's moral indignation. Bass avoids the Whiggish temptation to turn the history of humanitarian intervention into the triumph of conscience over imperial cynicism. Each intervention presented a genuine dilemma. Realists such as Metternich and Disraeli thought intervention would destroy the order of Europe, and the humanitarians—or "atrocitarians," as Bass somewhat inelegantly calls them—believed that the conscience of Europe must not be sacrificed on the altar of order. Unlike the interventions of the recent past, the full consequences of which are still unfolding in Kosovo, Bosnia, and East Timor, the cases studied by Bass allow us to observe just how deeply conscience shook the order of states.

The campaign around Turkish atrocities against Bulgarian Christians is a stirring case in point. Had an American journalist not filed his sensational report on these atrocities in 1876, Gladstone might not have supplanted Disraeli, Russia might not have gone to war against the Turks in 1877, the Austro-Hungarians might not have occupied Bosnia in 1878, and the chain of consequences that led Gavrilo Princip to assassinate the archduke in Sarajevo in 1914 might not have been set in motion. One clear message for the humanitarians of today is that they cannot allow themselves the luxury of indifference to the strategic consequences of their own moralism. Before they call for action, they must, as best they can, examine—or game out, as we now say—how the dominoes are likely to fall.

The realists of the time, Disraeli and Metternich, foresaw these consequences more clearly than the humanitarians. They believed that it was necessary to keep the Ottoman Empire afloat if the combustible nationalisms of Eastern Europe were to be contained and the long imperial peace maintained. And so it came to pass: once the liberal interventionists started intervening on the side of the peoples groaning under the Turkish yoke—first the Greeks, then the Bulgarians, finally the Armenians—the long slide into world war began.

If the realists anticipated these consequences more clearly than the interventionists, the realists certainly failed to understand that maintaining the Ottoman Empire by massacre was itself not a viable option. Nationalist revolts against Ottoman domination were inevitable, and the imperial order that the realists defended was steadily weakening and was finally bound to collapse. The atrocitarians saw this more clearly than the realists. The real Eastern Question was not whether the Ottoman Empire could be saved, but who would benefit from its collapse—Russia or the Western powers, and the various nationalisms that each promoted.

Bass argues at length that while Western intervention in the Ottoman Empire was driven by both imperial and humanitarian motives, the two impulses were distinct. Many humanitarians—Jeremy Bentham, for example—were vehement opponents of their own empires. Byron did not die for the British Empire. He died for the Greeks, and of course for his own glory. Despite these examples, it is possible that Bass works too hard to persuade us that humanitarianism is unclouded by imperial impulse. Imperial racism toward Muslims in general and Turks in particular played a recurring role in propelling the European conscience to action. Gladstone's famous pamphlet *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*—one of the Magna Carta documents of the modern human rights movement—was, as Bass rightly notes, a mixture of over-the-top moralizing and raw anti-Turkish bigotry. Gladstone knew exactly nothing about Islam, the Turks, or the Ottoman Empire. But this did not stop him from characterizing the Turks as "the great anti-human specimen of humanity."

Humanitarians may be as racist as realists. The same condescension that prompts realists to stay out of the quarrels of little peoples can prompt humanitarians to plunge in to save them. If humanitarians—then and now—often underestimate the costs of intervention, it may be because they condescend to the capabilities of the butchers they are out to defeat. If they overestimate the gratitude of the people on whose behalf they intervene, it may be because they are too much in love with the fantasy of helpless and thankful victims.

Bass argues strenuously that these nineteenth-century interventions reveal a conspicuously modern human rights consciousness, secular and universal in character. It is less clear to me that the humanitarians drew a distinction between saving fellow Christians and saving fellow human beings. This is not to say that abstract moral universalism was not available to the humanitarians of the nineteenth century. Since Grotius in the 1620s, philosophers of law had argued that the moral duty to protect and to save extends to human beings per se and not simply to co-religionists or fellow subjects. Enlightenment figures such as Adam Smith had castigated the moral partiality of religious sectarians. It is also true that unbelievers such as Byron went to Greece to save the Greeks, not fellow Christians. Still, the fact that the enemy was Muslim and the victims were Christian seems to have shaped the moral partialities of a devout Christian such as Gladstone.

While Bass does make the case for an independent self-subsisting moral universalism in Western culture, in the instances of intervention that he discusses Christian solidarities seem more salient as motives than the human solidarity of the modern human rights variety. But these are minor quibbles about a book that is a spirited and elegant contribution to the moral history of humanitarian emotions and their tangled relation to imperial interest and religious faith.

In the grim present, humanitarian intervention feels like an idea whose time has come and gone. The reasons for this are worth exploring. For ten years after the end of the Cold War, stopping ethnic cleansing and massacre in other countries became the *cause célèbre* of every liberal internationalist. Some of the political leaders who took up the cause were even aware that humanitarian intervention had a lineage that they could use to justify their actions. Tony Blair explicitly placed the mantle of the Gladstonian heritage on his own shoulders in defending the Kosovo intervention in 1999. By early 2000, the idea that all states have a "responsibility to protect" civilians at risk of ethnic cleansing or massacre in other states appeared to carry all before it—it became something approaching a principle of international law.

In this moment of apparent triumph, it was easy to forget that this idea became possible simply because intervention ceased to carry the risk of armaggedon. Conscience could trump caution so long as the military risks were low. The interventions in Kosovo and Bosnia were possible for the West because the Russians, however much they backed the losing Serbs, were unable and unwilling to stop NATO and the Americans. The East Timor intervention was possible because Indonesia lacked a protector powerful enough to forbid the creation of a free Timor. No intervention occurred to stop the Russian carnage in Chechnya because the Russians would not allow it.

And now the current crisis in Georgia

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reminds us that we are no longer living in an era of Russian strategic weakness. The parenthesis that allowed humanitarian interventions to occur has come to an end. In the case of Georgia, the humanitarian impulse has collided with raw, vast, and unyielding power. The United States can intervene to keep Georgia from disappearing, but it cannot re-instate its sovereignty. Russia has gone ahead and declared the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This is an obvious riposte to Kosovo's independence, and therefore a warning that further humanitarian interventions of that type will not be tolerated in Russia's zone of influence.

China has delivered similar messages about Darfur. It grudgingly acquiesces in a failing U.N. military presence in the Sahara, but it will certainly stand against any political dismemberment of Sudan that would allow the Darfurians to break free of the regime in Khartoum. The combined resurgence of the Russians and Chinese makes it unlikely that the Security Council will authorize humanitarian interventions again, at least in regions vital to their interests.

But this is not the only factor, or even the main one, that threatens to consign humanitarian intervention to yesterday. The U.N. report that advocated the new doctrine of the "responsibility to protect" was sent to the printers in late August 2001. It was the high-water mark of the humanitarian faith. When it appeared in late September 2001, as the ruins of the World Trade Center were still smoldering, it was already irrelevant to American and European policymakers. Their overriding concern had shifted from protecting other country's civilians to protecting their own. And homeland security, not humanitarian intervention, has remained the policy imperative ever since.

Humanitarian intervention in the 1990s always required an American military component, or at least American strategic assistance. But the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have swallowed up all available military capacity and policy attention in Washington. Humanitarian intervention is no longer in the frame for any Western state. It is not merely that no one wants to go in anymore. It is also that no one believes that, once you do, you can succeed and then come home. Fixing broken states once looked possible. In Afghanistan and Iraq, everyone has learned how difficult it is to stay this course, especially for impatient societies such as our own.

This is why, for the moment at least, world-weary realism rules. Metternich and Disraeli are back in the saddle again. It is not that the need for intervention has disappeared. The case for intervention of some kind—to compel Mugabe to leave Zimbabwe, to compel Burma to allow relief workers to help cyclone victims, to protect Darfurians being murdered by the Janjaweed—remains as forceful as ever. The demand for humanitarian intervention is high, but the supply has dried up. The need to do something remains, but the moral conviction, together with the political will and the material resources to do it, has dwindled or disappeared.

And there is still another consideration that reinforces the idea that interventions are an impulse of Christian empires. It is that post-colonial countries are reluctant to shoulder the interventionist burden once taken by European states. The solution to the unfolding nightmare in Zimbabwe begins in South Africa, doesn't it? But African statecraft in general remains allergic to this sort of intervention. Imperialists thought big, and took on faraway responsibilities, for better and for worse; but post-imperial nation-states rarely think or act beyond their own immediate interests. The solidarity of oppressed peoples often disappears with their oppression.

From all this we might draw the wrong conclusion, namely that humanitarian intervention was a hectic but fleeting moral fashion of the 1990s—an opportunity for the West to display its insufferable moral superiority at low cost, and for liberal intellectuals to wear their consciences on their sleeves. Bass helps us to see our own moral history in a more serene and clear-eyed light. There was more to the interventions that saved the Bosnians, Kosovars, and East Timorese than moral vanity. The philosophical beliefs that drove those foreign campaigns had a history going back to Byron and the Greeks. Thanks to Bass's fine book, we can uncover the lineage of some enduring intuitions about the duties that people owe each other across borders. These moral intuitions may be in retreat right now, with great power politics in the ascendant; but it would be foolish to pronounce their demise. The impulse to save and protect others will survive this parenthesis of retreat. We are not done with evil, and so we are not done with humanitarian intervention. Its time will come again; or it had better come, if we are to continue to respect ourselves. ◆

Ingrid D. Rowland
FOUND AND LOST

WHO OWNS ANTIQUITY?: MUSEUMS AND THE BATTLE OVER OUR ANCIENT HERITAGE
By James Cuno
(Princeton University Press, 228 pp., $24.95)

THIS SPRING the state apartments of Italy's presidential palace, the Palazzo del Quirinale, hosted a remarkable exhibit of ancient Greek, Roman, and Etruscan artifacts, all of them found on Italian soil but held until recently in private collections and museums in the United States, notably the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The exhibit marked a diplomatic coup for Francesco Rutelli, the former mayor of Rome who until last April had served the left-wing government of Romano Prodi for two years as minister of culture. Through an arrangement of long-term loans and the deft application of diplomatic pressure, Rutelli had convinced museum directors that returning these artifacts, all of them acquired from dealers whose methods were not entirely scrupulous, would help to discourage the knowingly illegal looting of Greek, Roman, and Etruscan sites in Italy.

The exhibition was also a triumph of Italian taste. The seventeenth-century and nineteenth-century frescoes that decorate the vast halls of the Palazzo del Quirinale echoed the classical grace and many of the mythological themes of the ancient objects; the palazzo's Ming vases provided a point of cross-cultural comparison, and the crowds who gathered to see the show, mostly Italian, were, as we have come to expect, impeccably coiffed and dressed. To judge from their conversations, most of them were also impeccably knowledgeable. Both the crowds and the occasion provided an evocative portrait of contemporary Italy—a country with cultural traditions that reach back millennia, but also a country that has transformed itself since World War II from a recipient of UNICEF funds into one of the eight most formidable economic powers on the

Ingrid D. Rowland's new book, GIORDANO BRUNO: PHILOSOPHER/HERETIC, has just been published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

planet, not least because of that Italian reputation for style. (The show has since moved to a comparably dramatic location in the Palazzo Poli, whose main façade is the Trevi Fountain.)

Another exhibition providing an apposite portrait of today's Italy went up in July, with the enigmatic title "The Wolf and the Sphinx." It traces the ways in which Rome has been inspired over the millennia by ancient Egypt. Displayed within the Castel Sant'Angelo, which is the former mausoleum of Hadrian, that most Egyptophile of emperors, the show was mounted in part of the suite decorated in the 1540s for Pope Paul III Farnese, another figure fascinated by ancient Egypt and the onetime owner of an ancient bronze tabletop with scenes from the cult of Isis. Within this huge ancient Roman structure, beneath its Renaissance frescoes, that tabletop, along with Renaissance books and manuscripts, echoed the same themes as ancient statues, Egyptian and Roman (as well as their medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque imitations). Modern Egyptian musicians played in front of Raffaele da Montelupo's fifteenth-century marble image of the archangel Michael, and the whole assemblage showed the imprint, wacky and erudite, of its supremely imaginative curator, Eugenio Lo Sardo.

"The Wolf and the Sphinx" provides a particularly complex example of what it can mean to display artifacts (and works of art) in context. It matters that both these exhibits took place not just in Rome, but in the Palazzo del Quirinale and in the Castel Sant'Angelo, with all the history and symbolism inherent in those buildings. And both of these exhibitions stand, in their dignified glory of setting, content, and audience, as stiff challenges to the picture of museums, nations, and archaeological material that James Cuno presents in his new book.

As director of the Art Institute of Chicago, Cuno faces, more directly than most people, the complex problems posed by what is now an immense global market in antiquities from every part of the world. His position of responsibility certainly raises the expectation that his analysis of this tangled issue would be reasoned, thoughtful, and historically as well as politically informed; but his book begins with a series of scenarios more fit for a polemicist's pamphlet than a guide for the perplexed. Noting that modern laws about the import and export of antiquities did not exist when Napoleonic troops discovered the Rosetta Stone, Cuno suggests that under modern conditions British soldiers might not have been able to snatch the stone from the French invaders and spirit it away to the British Museum, with the result that Jean-François Champillon might not have been able to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphic script. The point of this exercise, and several other scenarios spun in a similarly speculative vein, is to demonstrate a larger point, which is that antiquities laws as currently drawn impoverish rather than enrich the global level of culture.

"The emotional, 'national cultural identity' card played by some proponents of nationalist retentionist cultural property laws is really a strategic, political card," Cuno writes. "National museums are important instruments in the formation of nationalist narratives; they are used to tell the story of a nation's past and confirm its present importance. That may be true of national museums, but it is not true of encyclopedic museums, those whose collections comprise representative examples of the world's artistic legacy." In other words, the present attempts by nations such as Egypt, Italy, Greece, Mexico, and Cambodia to hold on to their archaeological legacy prevents the acquisition of archaeological artifacts by "great encyclopedic museums," and this is bad for two reasons: the looting will continue anyway, and the museum-going public will be denied the sight of inspirational works of art. "Retentionist nationalism" is the dragon that Cuno would slay in this book, rather than the greedy trade in antiquities that has inspired such retentionist legislation in the first place; and the St. George who rides into the fray is the group of museums—including his own, the British Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art—that attempts to present a cross-section of world culture to their public.

Cuno's prime example of an encyclopedic museum is an institution whose name, the British Museum, suggests no small connection with the idea of nationhood, and certainly its possession of the Rosetta Stone snatched out from under the Corsican nose of "Boney" Bonaparte was the cause in 1802 and ever afterwards of considerable nationalist glee. (So was the purchase of the Elgin Marbles from the Ottoman governors of early nineteenth-century Athens.) The British Museum was undoubtedly a product of Enlightenment idealism, as Cuno repeatedly notes, but that idealism more than coincidentally assumed that being British was the best of all possible human conditions, just as Boney, across the Channel, assumed that true Enlightenment could speak only French, and was willing to pillage the Vatican Museums to prove his point. The great encyclopedic museums were predicated, perhaps to a one, on the idea that their local public constituted the world's best people, and hence the most deserving to stand in the presence of high culture, with a smattering of primitives to drive that sense of superiority home.

This was the cultural version of a political process acknowledged already in the Middle Ages and known as *translatio imperii*, or "shifting the right to rule"—not an entirely Enlightened stance. And this tradition lasted long. A century after the Enlightenment, the founders of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Art Institute of Chicago imperiously took it for granted that those cities belonged to a United States of America that stood as beacon to the world—the land of the free and the home of the brave. It is either naïve or tendentious to argue that those institutions were founded instead to serve some great multicultural vision of human fraternity.

Indeed, a certain basic confusion of arguments nags Cuno's book from beginning to end. However earnest its purpose, *Who Owns Antiquity?* plays so fast and loose with history and logic in its opening chapters that it cannot possibly gather together its dissipated forces to deliver the intended final punch, which is a plea for those great encyclopedic museums to act as peacemakers in today's fragmented, polarized, conflict-ridden world. Peacemaking is a novel role for institutions that were founded—like the picture gallery in Pericles's Acropolis, the hall of statues in the Forum of Augustus, and the statue gallery of Pope Julius II—to serve as the monumental trophy cases of great powers; and a great power's version of peace, as Tacitus memorably noted, could look like a desert from another point of view.

Cuno takes special pains to disparage the very country that would otherwise serve as one of his most promising allies in implementing the vision of a new humanitarian mission for large museums: Italy. His opening chapters aim a few choice blows at Italian antiquities laws for their "nationalist retentionist" folly, and a long footnote takes special care to blast former minister of culture Rutelli for "political antics." (If so, what word could possibly remain in the English vocabulary to describe the antics of Silvio Berlusconi?) Yet when the book moves on to specific examples of nationalism and its perils, it concentrates on the history of Ottoman and then modern Turkey, twentieth- and twenty-first-century Iraq, and the People's Republic of China, nearly bypassing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Italy altogether. Each of the countries that Cuno considers at length has certainly posed its own particular dangers for its archaeological record in our time, but for drastically different reasons; and they are all still struggling out of the third world into the first. But not so Italy. It is both a "source country," a producer of antiquities, and, owing to its wealth and millennial culture, a prime consumer. No wonder the Chinese archaeologists who designed the museum for the Neolithic site of Banpo Village in the 1950s looked to Italy for their model, and found it in Giacomo Boni's early twentieth-century displays of prehistoric material in the Roman Forum. In many respects, Italy is where China would like to be. Turkey and Egypt would like to be there, too.

Nor will it do to hit at Italian laws and then dodge a forthright look at Italy's relationship not only with antiquity, but indeed with the very discipline of archaeology. Italy, after all, is rare among nations because it is both a prime producer and a prime consumer of archaeological artifacts. Because of this peculiar status, Italy has posed the most specific and sophisticated challenge to the directors of American museums who are now facing the consequences of their erstwhile rapacious acquisition policies. Like any venerable museum in the United States, the Art Institute of Chicago has its own complement of archaeological treasures removed from Italian soil over the decades with a lack of concern for context that this powerful, educated, wealthy land now has the wit and the clout to classify as no longer acceptable. But Italians are also superb negotiators, particularly skilled at finding solutions that preserve face on all sides. What purpose is served then by taking a swipe at Rutelli at the precise moment when the directors of the Met, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Getty Museum, and the Princeton Museum have all signed long-term agreements of international cooperation, through Rutelli's direct mediation, with the Italian government? Does dissent truly serve the best interests of the Art Institute of Chicago, let alone archaeology, the public, the cultural awareness of collectors, the general state of knowledge about our collective past, and diplomatic etiquette?

Italy has a long acquaintance with the traffic in antiquities, in all its ramifications. The Roman siege of Corinth by Lucius Mummius in 146 B.C.E. ended, as such campaigns often do, in widespread looting, including the looting of ancient Corinthian graves for their jewelry and ceremonial vessels. A radically different idea of cultural property dominates a legal case that was argued in Rome, Rutelli's native city, in 70 B.C.E. by a rising young lawyer named Marcus Tullius Cicero. Early in his career, Cicero made the risky choice to prosecute the corrupt and greedy Gaius Verres for misconduct as governor of Sicily. (The trial is also the subject of Robert Harris's recent novel *Imperium: A Novel of Ancient Rome*.) Despite Verres's powerful social connections and bullying ways, Cicero won, because he knew exactly where he wanted to go with his case, and went there with hardheaded clarity of purpose. Imperial power and imperial amounts of money, he would convincingly claim, do not justify disrupting the integrity of a culture. "You will say, 'I bought it,'" he scoffed to Verres. "So what? It is simply arrogant to say 'Sell me those vases'—that is to say, 'You're not worthy to have something so well made. Those fit better with my own rank.' Is it so intolerable, Verres, for someone else to have something you like?"

Italy poses other problems for Cuno's line of argument as well. He insists, in another of his bids against nationalism, that there is no connection between the present populations of Turkey and China and the creators of those territories' archaeological remains: a Turk is not a Hittite, any more than Han Chinese are responsible for the marvels to be found along the Central Asian stretches of the Silk Road. Consequently, he argues, there is no reason that the national governments of these places should regard the archaeological heritage as one of national rather than general human interest—and hence, by extension, the ancient objects that these territories contain might as well be at Harvard or Berlin rather than Dunhuang and Turpan.

Cuno provides a fascinating account of his own trip to the Mogao caves in the remote deserts of Xinjiang Province, which were first brought to the West's attention by the Hungarian-born explorer Marc Aurel Stein in 1907, when he traveled there on behalf of the British Museum. Stein was followed the subsequent year by the French scholar Paul Pelliot, and in 1924 by Langdon Warner of Harvard. (All of these expeditions feature in Peter Hopkirk's riveting book *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*.) Stein, Pelliot, and Warner did an incalculably important job of retrieving and studying ancient material from the Silk Road at a time when Xinjiang was torn by war and oppressed by poverty. The objects that they took from Xinjiang might well have been ruined beyond usefulness had they been left in place, and the world would be the poorer for it. Cuno's picture of the ravages that China has undergone (and that its governments have inflicted) as the result of its early twentieth-century upheavals, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and cutthroat capitalism cover familiar territory, and it is a tragic and devastating picture, for the most part. The world now knows about the Chinese government's attempts to eliminate the Muslim Uighurs as well as its decades-long oppression of Tibetan Buddhists; their struggles stand before us. Cuno's real point in discussing the case of China must surely be that the arts, past and present, are a force that work to unite and uplift humanity as a whole—but it sounds at times as if he is urging the world's museums to save China from the Chinese. To which the Chinese might object that World War II and the Iraq war committed heinous crimes against archaeology, and ask the pot what it means to imply about the color of the kettle.

ANTHONY RUSSO

It is impossible, moreover, to insist on an analogous gap between the Italian peninsula's archaeological heritage and the biological heritage of its present-day inhabitants. DNA tests have shown that modern Tuscans are indeed related to the Etruscans found in local tombs, and one family in Volterra, the Cecina, boasted both a close friend of Cicero and an eighteenth-century antiquarian. The cultural connections are, quite simply, unbroken. By the fifteenth century the artists, the writers, the statesmen, and the natural philosophers of the Italian Renaissance had developed an acute awareness of their distinctively Etruscan and Roman pasts, and expressed it in such a way that this cultural, artistic, and philosophical legacy still stands as a basic component of modern Italian—not to mention Western—culture. In connection with that same Renaissance, Italy is also the place where, in the fifteenth century, archaeology as we know it was invented, along with the first public art museum, which was opened on the Capitoline Hill in 1471 by Pope Sixtus IV.

Cuno's desire to make an Enlightened argument invites an Enlightenment response: as Dr. Johnson said, kicking a stone, "I refute it thus." It is a different thing to see the ancient statue called the Spinario right there in Rome where Pope Sixtus put it in 1471, where many of the great artists of the Renaissance drew it, where Winckelmann and Goethe

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

saw it, than it is to see an ancient bronze in the Met. It is one thing to stand in the theatre of Ephesus, right there where the riot broke out among the silversmiths who made votive trinkets for the Temple of Artemis, who feared the impact that a wandering preacher named Paul of Tarsus might have on their business—and it is quite another matter to see a column from that temple in the British Museum. The Elgin Marbles have been spared the foul air of modern Athens, but they were not spared a good British scrub down with soap and water when they arrived in the early nineteenth century, and neither fate has been kind to the polished surface of the Parthenon's sculpture.

Many antiquities are more mobile than the Temple of Artemis or pieces of the Parthenon, and were meant to be moved. These mobile antiquities, precisely because of their mobility, illustrate the real damage caused by indiscriminate collecting. The Etruscans, for example, were eager but choosy importers of Athenian ceramics. Like the artisans of Ming and Qing China, Athenian potters produced vessels on order for Etruscan clients, which means that these apparently Greek vases in fact belong to two cultures. (Josiah Wedgwood and his eighteenth-century contemporaries thought that the Greek vases coming out of the ground in Naples, Pompeii, and Vulci *were* Etruscan, and in a real sense Wedgwood was right.) The Euphronios krater that Thomas Hoving purchased under shady conditions for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1972 was more than a triumph of Greek art (callously smashed to facilitate transport out of Italy); it was also an equally important document of Etruscan taste. It is now on display in Rome together with a stunning series of similar kraters, similarly ripped from Etruscan tombs for the benefit of Grecophile collectors in the United States. A surprising number of the vases that classicists use to reconstruct ancient Athenian life were actually found in Etruria and are hence bicultural rather than purely Athenian; they are complex rather than simple windows onto the past.

Many Greek vases found in Italy, such as the monumental Athenian krater known as the François Vase (now displayed at the Archaeological Museum in Florence), bear mythological images that may well have had their own peculiarly Etruscan significance as well as their significance to the Athenian potter Ergotimos and the painter Kleitias. We know for certain where the François Vase was found, and this helps us to speculate more intelligently about the meaning of its dizzying wealth of imagery and its 127 written inscriptions. In the case of the Euphronios krater we can supposedly only guess—although it is in fact perfectly well known that it came from an Etruscan tomb in Cerveteri and that is was shattered by the *tombaroli*, the professional tomb robbers who dug it out illegally. Yet to treat this vase as a masterpiece of Greek art is rather like pretending that Picasso was a Spanish artist who never saw Paris.

Cuno expends considerable effort in showing how several artifacts from the Art Institute are similarly multicultural—a medieval monstrance that encloses an Islamic Egyptian perfume bottle, a Swahili-Sicilian box—but he stays carefully away from this particular and rather urgent example of archaeological multiculturalism. Greek vases of Etruscan provenance abound in the Art Institute's collection, every one of them a woefully missed opportunity to learn more about two areas of the ancient world. What was it that Cicero said? "It is simply arrogant to say, 'Sell me those vases'—that is to say, 'You're not worthy to have something so well made. Those fit better with my own rank.'"

In this context, indeed, it is difficult not to notice Cuno's lavish praise in a footnote for the American collector Shelby White, who has owned many Greek vases that were removed from Etruscan tombs by the same summary methods that removed the Euphronios krater from its Etruscan home. Rutelli has convinced her to give back some of her Grecian bounty, too, which would seem to suggest all the more reason to praise them both. But Cuno presumably regards White not as a participant in a pioneering set of international agreements, but rather as an important donor, along with her late husband Leon Levy, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In such a context, "Our Ancient Heritage," from the book's subtitle, can be read as a brief for outright possession—that we own antiquity as much as the Italians, Greeks, Chinese, and Iraqis do, and therefore we have an equal right to their archaeological wealth—rather than as some abstract idea of respect for a shared human cultural tradition.

Hence this earnest plea for great encyclopedic museums also reveals a certain more mundane set of interests. As Cicero said, *Cui bono*? For whose benefit? Who is this book's real audience? It can be no coincidence that several words never appear in Cuno's book. They are fundamental to a proper understanding of the present-day antiquities market. I have in mind words such as "greed," "hubris," and "organized crime." For that matter, the word "money" barely appears, despite the fact that great encyclopedic museums require and dispense huge mountains of lucre. We really do know—this is not just a suspicion or a conjecture—that if a Pompeiian painting appears on the art market today, it has almost certainly been cut out of a wall with the criminal help of the Camorra, the Neapolitan version of the Mafia that was recently laid bare by Roberto Saviano's *Gomorra*, and that the channels that pass along the loot from Etruscan and Apulian tombs, as well as the artifacts in Mexico and China, go underground, not above. This is why the Italian carabinieri, the national police force that is a branch of the military, established its Comando Tutela Patrimonio Culturale—usually known in English as the "Art Squad." Trained in every aspect of art restoration as well as forensics, this group has been phenomenally successful in recovering stolen paintings, manuscripts, and illegally excavated or stolen antiquities—and in raising public consciousness of the tight link between art theft and organized crime.

In the nineteenth century, Lucien Bonaparte permitted the wholesale ransacking by interested buyers of the ancient Etruscan city of Vulci—then his feudal property. The city of Chiusi, long fallen from its peak of splendor in the fifth century B.C.E., offered to sell interested customers in the 1880s an Etruscan sarcophagus, either fresh from a tomb or touched up to order. As a result, the museums of several continents may be the richer. But surely this is not a sufficient excuse to perpetuate feudalism and poverty, nor was it in 1870 or in 1946. The Italian nationalism that tried to end feudalism and poverty was as much a product of the Enlightenment as the British Museum.

In fact, Italy and its laws on cultural property illustrate, with rare precision, that nationalism is not such a simple phenomenon. Over the ages, nationalism seems to have been, and to be still, one of the mechanisms by which an agrarian society transforms itself into a more urban society, with consequences that include a healthier, wealthier, and more literate population. Italians once served foreign archaeologists as workmen, cooks, maids, and washerwomen because they lacked an education, but this is no longer the case. Italian scholars, including archaeologists, are as erudite and competent as any in the world. It is the foreigners who have the disadvantage now. The reasons for that disadvantage are political, to be sure, but more emphatically they are practical: how can an American professor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who comes to Italy only in the summer claim superior knowledge to someone who has lived and studied in the same place for a lifetime of changing seasons?

It is also worth noting that the idea of Italy as a latecomer among nations because it unified in 1870 is a bit of a canard. Here are two anecdotal refutations, from around 1500. A manuscript from 1493 in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich contains a series of scurrilous Latin poems aimed at "*Itali*" who have accused these German writers—whom the *Itali* actually called "barbarians"—of drunkenness; and the Germans retaliate by accusing the Italians of pederasty. Thirty years later, it was Erasmus of Rotterdam whose *Adages* proclaimed that a bald man from Mykonos was as hard to find as a brave Italian—an *italus bellicosus*. The word *barbarus* in Renaissance Italy meant a person who spoke with a German accent.

And as Italy went after World War II, so the rest of the world hopes to go. A growing number of modern Egyptians are no longer illiterate fellahin. The new Library of Alexandria stands across the street from the University of Alexandria, with its 140,000 students; its alumni include the Nobel laureate Ahmed Zewail, now at Caltech and one of the most imaginative chemists working today. Zahi Hawass may be a baron in his position as head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, but he serves notice to the barons who dwell in the world's encyclopedic museums that they must now take the bright, eager young people of Egypt into account. As for China, Cuno gives a relatively detailed analysis of the way in which that huge nation has been grappling, on a colossal scale, with some of the problems that Italy faced in the twentieth century: a deep, complex cultural tradition; the dual status as archaeological "source country" and increasingly wealthy consumer country; the legacies of a totalitarian regime. China is also acutely sensitive to what it sees as persistent international disdain. Its environment, its past, its myriad traditions, its widely diverse archaeological heritage—all have come under devastating pressure in an aggressive bid to modernize in terms recognized as modern by the rest of the planet. It is not clear that this is simply a problem of nationalism; it is also a problem of international ideas about what is old, what is new, what is enlightened, what is barbarous. In the name of internationally recognized ideas of progress—many going back, alas, to the Enlightenment—the Three Gorges Dam, like the Aswan High Dam before it, threatens general environmental disaster, of which archaeological disaster is, like human disaster, only a subset.

Nationalism or internationalism aside, the fact remains that the people who inhabit a region will inevitably continue to bear the largest responsibility for the preservation of that region's archaeological legacy, whether or not the creators of that heritage belong to the same culture or ethnic group as the present-day inhabitants of the land, and whether or not the substance of that heritage is the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde, the mud architecture of Timbuktu or Sana'a, the Acropolis in Athens, Topkapi Palace, or Angkor Wat. The Temple of Huitzilopochtli will continue to lord it over the Zócalo of Mexico City, and the Valley of the Kings will rest by the Nile. The task of preserving them will fall most of all to locals, whatever one may think of their governmental systems or the suitability to human coexistence of the nation-state.

It is this inveterate and universal link to geography and geopolitics that defeats Cuno's proposed solution to what ails the antiquities market. His solution is to rehabilitate the nineteenth-century scheme of partage, in which a museum sponsors excavations in exchange for rights to possession of some of the excavation's findings. But such a plan can no longer work in the nineteenth-century way, when museums were unabashed instruments of imperialism, and ownership stood as proof of dominion. Imperium is no excuse. Cicero saw this long ago, on the eve of the Roman Empire, when he spoke out against the greed of Gaius Verres. The only plausible arrangement for museums today is to work as a peer among peers in schemes of international cooperation, already increasingly the norm for archaeological expeditions. The day is long gone when English, German, and American scholars could move in to tell the locals what was what and take their findings back to their encyclopedic museums to enlighten those who are deemed most capable of enlightenment. And what, pray tell, is so awful and limiting about a national museum like the Prado, or Castel Sant'Angelo, or the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, or the Cairo Museum?

Another solution to the problem of illicit excavation lies in the form of long-term loans of archaeological material from "source" countries to the countries that want to collect and to display it. Cuno complains about the short terms of loans granted by the Italian government, while noting that the law was recently changed to lengthen those terms. As minister of culture in the last Italian government, Rutelli was negotiating still longer terms for the loan of specific objects in his dealings with the Met and Boston—that is, quietly finding a solution to some of the very problems that Cuno is expatiating upon. He is not alone in that pursuit.

Cuno has scant patience for the single worldwide body that addresses cultural concerns, which is UNESCO. In his view, it is too much of an arena for nationalist grandstanding. But attacking the United Nations is like attacking democracy or the nation-state; these earthly things are all terribly flawed, but they are still some of the best tools we have to drive back some of the darkness. Museums themselves are not inexorably destined to be instruments of innocent benevolence; they can dish out blockbuster bread and circuses with all the imperious relish of Commodus unleashing a troop of gladiators on the Colosseum, or they can just shut their doors and say "too bad." They can squander their riches through neglect with the possessive abandon of a Haida chieftain at a potlatch.

Both the Met and the Getty have gone through periods of dreadful and destructive arrogance in the past thirty years—the rivals, in their sheer superciliousness, of any British imperialist or ancient Roman proconsul. James Cuno is clearly of a different breed, and that is a change of tremendous, and positive, importance to the place of museums in the twenty-first century. Would then that his brief for a more truly global mission for himself and his colleagues were argued with the punch and eloquence of Cicero, who was not afraid to face the real problems posed by the antiquities market—by the hubris, greed, and lust for possession that beautiful things have always exerted on our own breed of gregarious primate. Only by facing down those problems squarely, with relentless logic, was Cicero able to persuade the Roman Senate—and us, two millennia later—that, precisely because of our appetite for beauty, we are capable of, and bound to exercise, our nobility too. ◆

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE/PERSONAL ASSISTANT

New York City—Highly intelligent, resourceful individuals with exceptional communication skills sought to undertake research projects and administrative tasks for one of Wall Street's most successful entrepreneurs. We welcome applications from writers, musicians, artists, or others who may be pursuing other professional goals in the balance of their time. $90-110k/yr to start (depending on qualifications). Resume to: gen8R@spsfind.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Diarist

Against Integrity

It took only a few days for the saga of Sarah Palin to go from Frank Capra to Preston Sturges to Judd Apatow, and then for the farce to stop being funny at all. These are not the times for right-wing screwball. The world is aflame and we have been pondering the knocked-up daughter of a pert and uncannily confident Alaskan mediocrity who was elevated to a national ticket for the purpose of changing the conversation. The Republicans wanted a new conversation, and they got one. *Juno* in Juneau! The anthropological harvest has been rich: what a carnival of double standards Palin provoked. I was unaware of the tender feelings of conservatives for sex outside of marriage. I thought that all the swingers in America lived in fleshpots such as this, my Beltway Babylon, where just this morning a vixen in pinstripes walked over from K Street and dropped an expensed grape into my mouth, but I was wrong. I should not have scanted the libertine understanding of my Christian brothers and sisters. I am also happy to learn from them that pregnant teenagers are an American norm—"hardly shocking," as the Right Reverend Michael Gerson taught in *The Washington Post*. Some commentators have detected moral relativism in the untroubled, even edified conservative response to the obstetric developments in the McCain campaign; but I see something even more sinister. I see the teleological suspension of the ethical. You remember the teleological suspension of the ethical. It is the recognition that, whereas there is morality in religion, religion is not the same as morality, and may justify an exemption from morality. I know of no religion in which this handy power of extenuation is not used. The telos, in the case of Bristol Palin, is life; and a fine telos it is. The casuistry goes something like this: since there are no unwanted babies, there are no unwanted pregnancies. "It can sometimes result in the arrival of new life and a new family," Gerson cheered. For "evangelical Christianity (in most modern forms) is not about the achievement of perfection." If evangelicals are so exquisitely conscious of our creatureliness, why have they devoted so many decades to reviling the imperfections of others? If they are, as Gerson says, "about the acceptance of forgiveness," why do they diabolize difference? The fecundity of Bristol Palin is a windfall for Jesus, but the fecundity of black girls is the doom of the republic. Spiritually speaking, the forgiveness of oneself or of one's own is a smaller attainment than the forgiveness of the other or of all. My friends, the politics of virtue is a vice.

Sarah Palin was chosen not for what she has done but for what she is—for her value as an ideological illustration. Her distinction lies in her typicality, whereas the Democratic candidate is a monster of atypicality. She is, quite plainly, a stranger to skepticism. No McCain-like temperament here; only a vivacious dogmatism. As mayor of Wasilla she considered the banning of books from the town's library. Three of her five children exemplify articles of conservative faith. And she sees God in her own activities. "I think God's will has to be done in unifying people and companies to get that gas line built," she testified at a church in June about her big project as governor. For thine is the kingdom and the power point! Certainly the politics of resentment have never before been expressed by the cute wrinkling of a nose. But the truth is that Sarah Palin is a woman of integrity. I do not say this sardonically. I find nothing phony in her, nothing cynical. She lacks the detachment from one's own purposes that phoniness and cynicism (and genuine thought) require. She is too immediately what she is. Palin is the sort of supporter of the war in Iraq whose son is shipping off to the war in Iraq. This I must respect. She is not a Palm conservative, pausing over the creamed spinach to raise another glass to the America in which she chooses not to dwell. Whatever the Christian conservative way of life is, Palin is living it. And so her grotesque and fascinating candidacy broaches an interesting subject, which is the moral insufficiency of integrity. In its etymological origins, integrity refers to wholeness, to a coherent arrangement of the parts into a whole, to the consistency of the parts with each other, to the harmony of a thing or a being with itself. Integrity is a formal property, a consideration of structure. It is, in other words, contentless. It is indifferent to the substance of the elements whose internal relations are its concern, and neutral about questions of truth and falsity, good and evil. False ideas often add up; evil individuals often add up. A unified identity is not for that reason an admirable identity. It is all very nice to have the courage of one's convictions, but the convictions matter as much as the courage.

The wrath in St. Paul was surprising. From the roars of the Republicans, from their elites' attack upon elites, you would have thought that for the last eight years we have been governed by Adlai Stevenson. By wiping George W. Bush away, the Republicans recovered their anger, which anyway they cherish. This poses strategic and even psychic challenges to the Democrats. Will they get angry at the anger? The problem with Barack Obama's dulcet call for a new politics is that it, too, is righteously contentless. Why is civility so essential? Is negativity not one of the conditions of criticism? The aim in politics is not to be sweet but to be right, and then to win. What is said counts more than how it is said. In the grammar of politics, the adverb is less significant than the direct object: not better politics, but better policies; not the form of politics, but the content. As for bipartisanship, it generally means your defection to my party. When a party stands for something, there is honor in belonging to it. And when the parties stand for antithetical conceptions of nation and government, bipartisanship is a dodger's daydream. Obama visits the low ground but he prefers the high ground. This may damage him. It leaves him more vulnerable to hypocrisy, as when he solemnly asked reporters to desist from covering Bristol Palin's big news. "I would strongly urge people to back off these kinds of stories," he said. "You know, my mother had me when she was 18." Yes, we know; and we know because he told us, again and again. His narrative of his own family is one of the foundations of his campaign. If Obama is elected president, his preference for the high ground may damage us, too. For the only way to provide security and health care for all Americans is ruthlessly.

Leon Wieseltier

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our schools are failing. While the rest of the developed world is preparing their children for the new century, we're sending our children to schools conceived during the Cold War.

24
Number of countries that outscore U.S. schools in math*

93%
Percentage of U.S. middle school science teachers who have little or no training in science*

Math and science are the very disciplines our children (and our country) will need to be competitive in the booming technology sector. But forget math and science. Our children can barely read.

70%
Percentage of American 8th-graders who can't read at 8th-grade levels*

YOUR CHILD'S RANK?

Find out how your child stacks up against children in other countries at **strongamericanschools.org**

The countries with the best schools attract the best jobs. If jobs move to countries like Finland and South Korea, your child's opportunities dry up. And so does our economy.

21st
International ranking of America's high school graduation rate*

0%
Percent increase in number of bachelor's and master's degrees awarded in U.S.: the only developed country with no increase*

We can stick our heads in the sand. Or we can deal with reality. Our schools need rigorous American standards, performance pay for teachers and more learning time and support for students. Now is not soon enough.

To ignite change in your school, go to strongamericanschools.org. Get the facts. Get the tools. Wake up the school board in your town and the politicians in Washington. America is only as strong as her schools.

ONE NATION LEFT BEHIND

STRONG AMERICAN SCHOOLS

AS OUR SCHOOLS GO, SO GOES OUR COUNTRY

strongamericanschools.org

*SOURCES: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2007; National Academy of Sciences, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2007; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2007; Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2007.

Strong American Schools, a project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, is a nonpartisan campaign supported by The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation promoting sound education policies for all Americans. SAS does not support or oppose any candidate for public office and does not take positions on legislation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHEN YOU COVER
ONE IN THREE
AMERICANS YOU
DON'T JUST OFFER
COVERAGE, YOU OFFER
SOLUTIONS
Serving more than 100 million members, Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies constantly seek ways to improve care and reduce costs. This pursuit of excellence has helped us find better ways to address the issues facing us all. Our Pathway to Covering America provides a five-point solution for a nation looking for better value and better quality care, while expanding coverage to everyone. Find out more at bcbs.com
BlueCross BlueShield Association
An Association of Independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans
Leading the future of healthcare

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED